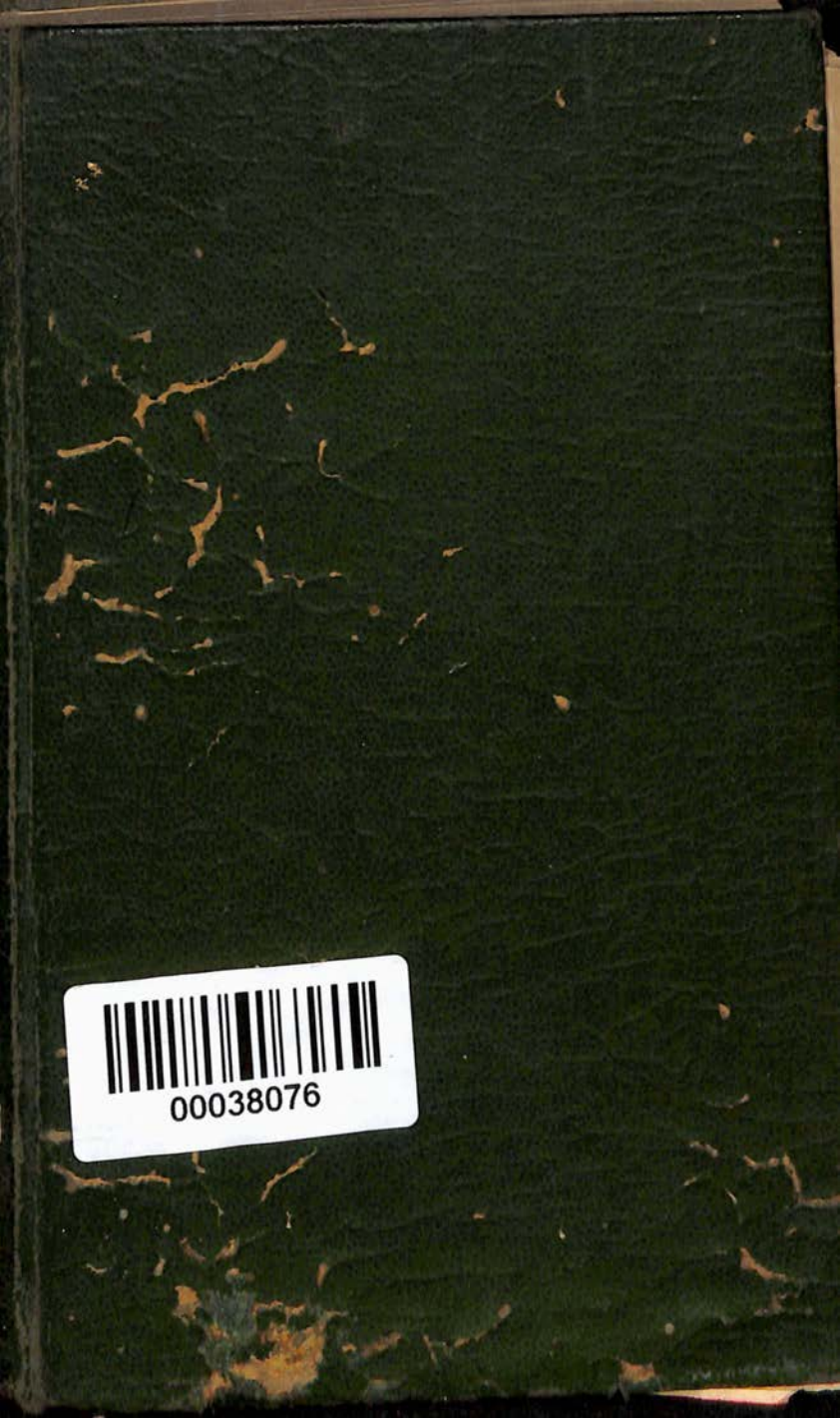
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TARANTASSE JOURNEY

THROUGH

EASTERN RUSSIA

IN THE

AUTUMN OF 1856.

BY

WILLIAM SPOTTISWOODE, M.A., F.R.S.

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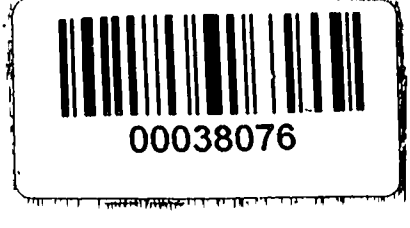
LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS, & ROBERTS.

1857.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PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH the countries within the range of the summer tourist are perfectly well known in a geographical point of view, there are still many subjects of interest connected with them on which the amateur may throw light, when original explorers and scientific missions have completed their labours. No part of the world can be thoroughly understood until it has been described by various persons, visiting it at different times, and under different circumstances; by private individuals as well as by government agents, by travellers whose province is the passing impression and daily incident of travel, as well as by observers of a wider grasp.

With the exception of Oliphant's spirited voyage down the Volga, the eastern part of Russia has been left almost exclusively to the scientific expeditions under Humboldt, Murchison, Hommaire de Hell, Goebel, and a few others of an earlier date. And

to this fact I would refer rather than to recent events, as a ground for supposing that any interest would attach itself to a tour through these regions. I advisedly call it a tour, for it was nothing else; no more, in fact, than is perfectly practicable for any one who can spare three months for the purpose, and who does not mind losing a few nights' rest on the road. Having met with no accidents or stirring adventures whatever, I have none to relate. But if this be a matter of regret to the general reader, it will perhaps be a ground of satisfaction to any who may hereafter propose to themselves a similar tour; not that courage or determination are likely to be wanting in an English traveller, but because delay is the most serious misfortune that can befal the tourist whose time is limited.

For the information of future travellers I may mention that I went first to St. Petersburg by way of Berlin and Warsaw, having chosen the post road instead of the sea passage, partly in order to omit no part of the country that might be included in the tour, and partly to gain some experience of Russian posting before reaching the parts less frequented by our countrymen. From St. Petersburg I went by railway to Moscow, at which point the following

ative begins. The dates of my arrival and stay at the principal places are sufficiently stated to give a fair idea of the time necessary to perform each part of the route; but details of expenses, distances, and accommodation will find a more appropriate place in the Handbook of Russia, of which it is to be hoped that at no very distant period a new edition may be published. It should, however, be added that we were furnished only with the ordinary passports, issued by the police, and procurable at each government town.

My only companion throughout the whole tour was my courier James Lozeron (called L. in the narrative), than whom a more faithful and efficient person could not be desired; and it was mainly owing to his unflinching energy and spirit that we accomplished the distance in so short a time.

With the exception of Chapters VI. and X., the following pages consist of little else than the rough notes made from time to time on the journey. The account of the tribes has been compiled partly from my own observations, partly from the principal writers on the subject, among whom I would especially mention Professor Max Müller, being indebted

to him personally as well as to his writings for information on the subject.

As regards the description of our visit to the Buddhist temple, it should be explained that instead of attempting a formal account of the religion and theology of the Kalmucks, I have endeavoured to adopt the language which a Buddhist pilgrim might be supposed to use, in describing a similar visit. And I believe that the chapter contains no ideas, and but very few expressions, which are not either taken out of their books or borrowed from their manners, customs, and current modes of thought.

In the orthography of proper names I have ventured, in some instances, to depart from the received usage. And although I do not pretend to have succeeded in framing any scientific set of equivalents for the Russian alphabet, I have endeavoured to transcribe the letters as systematically as possible, without losing sight of the variations in pronunciation. In some cases there is no difficulty; thus ж may be considered to be better represented by *zh* than by *j*, for philologically it has the same relation to *z* that *sh* has to *s*, and phonetically it approaches more nearly to the sound *zh* than to the French *j*. With the English sound *j* it has nothing whatever

in common. In other cases, such as those in which the sound of the final consonant is modified by the silent vowel which follows it, the course is not so simple; but, generally, I am in hopes that the reader will not go far wrong if he gives to the letters their usual English sound, with the exception of the final *v* of the common termination *ov*, which closely resembles an *f*. I have preferred *v* to the usual *f* or *ff* because the original в is really a *v*. In the single case of Saposhnikoff I have retained the *ff*, because that gentleman spells his own name in European letters in that way.

Lest the reader should be disappointed at an entire absence of political allusion, I would state that I neither made the journey, nor do I now write, with any political object; but simply as a traveller to whom every square mile of this earth's surface is interesting, and the more so in proportion as it is less known. In so rapid a journey it would indeed have been impossible to arrive at any mature judgment upon the political, social, or commercial aspect of Russia; but it is equally impossible not to receive vivid impressions of the almost inexhaustible natural resources of the country,—the timber of the forest region, the grain of the black soil zone, the pastures

of the steppes, and the wonderful arteries of water-communication transformed into a network by a few short canals. Nor can the traveller avoid being struck by the want of intercourse, both social and commercial, among the thin rural population, owing to the distance between the villages and the absence of all scattered dwellings. Nor, lastly, can the low intellectual development of the people,—their apparent inability to adopt improvements or new ideas, the peculiarity of their religious notions, with many other features of the country, its inhabitants, and institutions,—fail to remind him that, on entering Russia, he has already passed the limits of European life, and arrived at a region where western civilisation merely overlays oriental barbarism; like one of their own fur cloaks thrown hastily over the limbs of a benumbed traveller, who, though still motionless and inactive, may some day be roused to a life as energetic as that exhibited by the rest of the western world.

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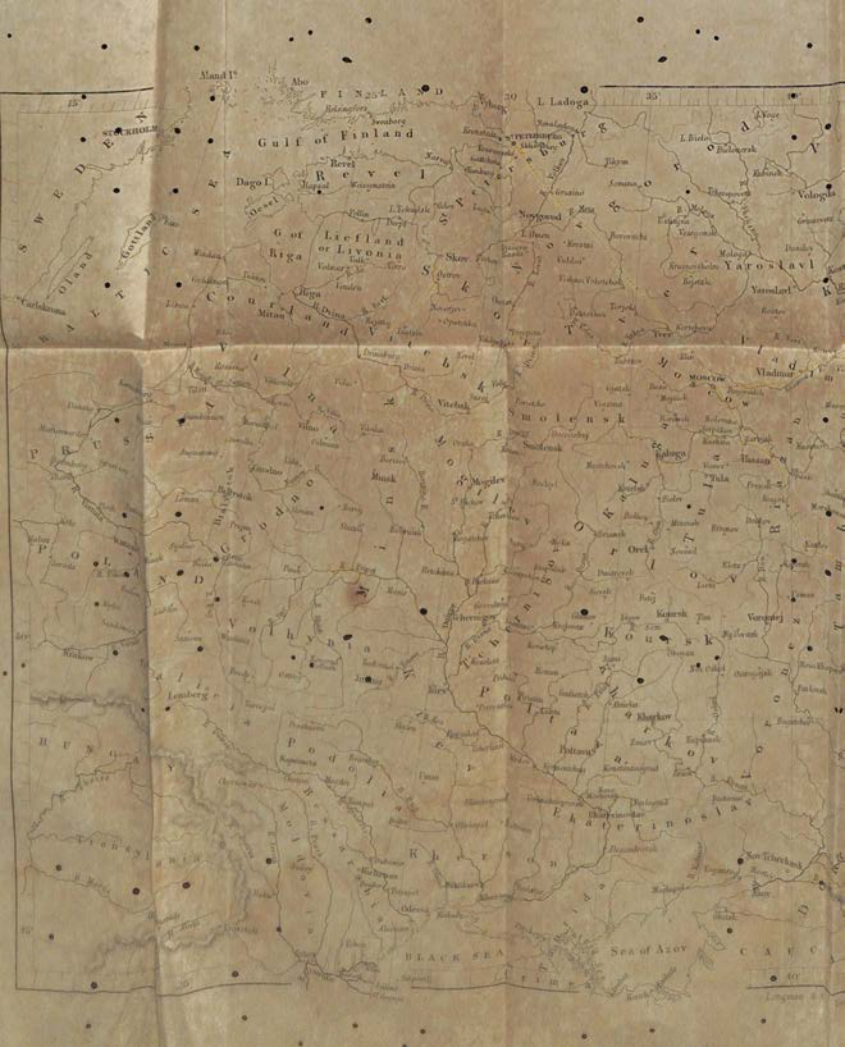
Aland Is.
Abo
FINLAND
L. Ladoga
STOCKHOLM
Gulf of Finland
Revel
Dago I.
Oesel
Gulf of Liefland or Livonia
Riga
Courland
Mitau
SWEDEN
Gothland
Oland
Carlskrona
Novgorod
Yaroslavl
Vologda
Vladimir
Moscow
Smolensk
Kaluga
Orel
Kursk
Voronez
Kharkov
Poltava
Ekaterinoslav
Kherson
Nov Tcherkask
Sea of Azov
BLACK SEA
CAUC
Volhynia
Podolia
Lemberg
Vilna
Grodno
Minsk
Mogilev
Vitebsk
PRUSSIA
POLAND
RUSSIA

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SIBERIA
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Perova
Ekaterinburg
Kazan
Simbirsk
Penza
Saratov
Khirgiz Steppe
Astrakhan
Mouths of the Volga
CASPIAN SEA
ARAL SEA
Ust Urt
Salt Lakes
Volga
Don
Ural
Kama
Oka
Sura
Tsna
Moksha
Vyatka
Kotelnich
Nikolsk
Vologda
Kostroma
Yaroslavl
Nizhnei Novgorod
Kasimov
Murom
Vladimir
Moscow
Kolomna
Tula
Kaluga
Smolensk
Orenburg
Uralsk
Guriev
Tsaritsin
Krasnoyarsk
Tobolsk
Tara
Tomsk
Barnaul
Kolyvan
Kolyvanskoi
Tsarskoe Selo
Petersburg

MOSCOW.

CHAPTER I.

DEPARTURE FROM MOSCOW. — VLADIMIR. — APPROACH TO NIZHNI. — VIEW FROM THE KREMLIN. — THE FAIR. — VOLGA STEAMER. — THE PASSENGERS. — MAKARIEV. — THE STAROVERTSI. — LANDING. — ARRIVAL AT KAZAN.

FROM the "forty times forty churches" of Moscow the bells were telling the vast army encamped about the city, and the mixed multitude from all parts of the empire, to rejoice in their new Tsar. Foreign carriages, native droshkies, and Cossack couriers, were bustling about the streets, and every one

seemed intent upon the great event which they were assembled to celebrate. The sun had already passed over the Sparrow Hills, whence Napoleon first saw the city, and was drawing toward the horizon; and the gilded and many-coloured domes were gathering richer hues from the evening light, when I took my last look from the terrace of the Kremlin.

I had not decided upon starting immediately for the interior until the morning of my departure, the 3rd of September; and it took so long to persuade the police authorities that any one could want a passport for leaving Moscow before the final ceremony of the coronation, that we had not more than time to complete our arrangements, and reach the diligence by the hour of starting. There was, at that time, a malleposte to Nizhni-Novgorod twice a week, and a diligence on the other days; the former performing the distance in thirty-six, and the latter in forty-eight hours. We travelled by the latter; but a judicious administration of "na vodka," or drink-money, to the postillions entirely set aside the regulation time, and we reached our destination in forty-one hours. For various little arrangements which added materially to our comfort, as well as for much useful information both at this time and

on my return, I was indebted to M. Rheinbott, a German, director of the mallepostes, whose intelligence and civility are well known at Moscow. The coaches are rather heavy, but they are strongly and well built, and the wheels must excite the admiration of every one who has made the journey from Warsaw to Petersburg, as a government courier, in a rather rickety carriage. The new chaussée is excellent; and an interior to ourselves, with plenty of provisions, left us nothing to desire.

The country between Moscow and Nizhni is undulating, and for the most part covered with pine and birch forest; the cultivation being principally carried on upon the higher ground, in consequence of the marshy state of the lower. There are but few fine trees in sight as we pass, as timber is never safe when within reach of a road. The destruction of the forests has for many years past been a subject on which apprehensions have been entertained; and it is unquestionably the fact both that great quantities of building timber are wasted in the neighbourhood of the navigable rivers, and that firewood is annually becoming more scarce in the Governments of Petersburg and Moscow. But while the forests cover one third of the entire surface of European

Russia, there seems to be little ground for fearing any serious failure in the supply of wood. The absolute quantity of this material required in the country, together with the inducements or opportunities for waste, have been, moreover, in some degree, diminished of late years by more active working of the peat mosses in the Government of Moscow and other parts of the empire, as well as by opening the coal beds of the Urals, and the anthracite of the basin of the Don; and it may generally be calculated that a dearth must always produce a more economical management for the future. The peat enjoys a good reputation as fuel, for it is said that two cubic feet of it will replace three of firewood.

The only town of importance between Moscow and Nizhni-Novgorod, is Vladimir, once the residence of the Dukes of Vladimir who waged war long and successfully against their eastern neighbours, the Tatars. It is now celebrated for its cherries. We reached it at 12. 30 P.M. on the day after leaving Moscow; and having made our morning meal in the carriage, we walked round the town, while "the diligence dined." It is prettily situated in the broad green valley of the Kliazma, a confluent of the Oka; but in spite of the luxuriously fine

day, and the pleasing profusion of church towers and spires, I thought the dinner unpardonably long, and looked wistfully at the white road-line stretching over the eastern hill in the direction of Nizhni.

The next morning found us in the Government of Nizhni. The straight line of road, and the trees, and the long lines of carts — twenty, fifty, and even a hundred at a time — bringing Asiatic merchandise from the fair, were alike beginning to seem interminable, when some rising ground and a less dense part of the forest opened to us our first view of the Volga.

Nizhni, or Lower Novgorod, is situated at the confluence of the Oka and the Volga, the town itself being built on the slopes of a hilly promontory between the former river and the combined streams. It has been remarked that the right bank of nearly all the Russian rivers is elevated, while the left is low. This is the case with most parts of the Volga which I visited; the Oka, moreover, may be seen for a great distance over the plains to the south-west, skirting a long line of hills from the blue distance to the point where Nizhni stands. The road, which for some hours had been perfectly straight, takes a turn to the left as we approach the

place, and brings us into view of the great wooden town in which the fair is held, and the little forest of masts that line the creeks beyond. This curious structure is placed on the low tongue of land between the two rivers before their confluence; and during the month of August and part of September it is probably the most crowded, if not one of the most busy places in the world; while at other times it is deserted. The whole is built with great regularity; every street is named, and every house numbered: in a central position there is a large stone edifice containing the governor's house, the police, post, and other offices. Towards the outskirts there is a Russian church and a mosque. Cafés — where, by the bye, tea, not coffee, is to be found — are abundant, and the best restaurateur in Nizhni is in the fair. The whole town is well drained by a system of sewers laid down in masonry at the time of its foundation; they are said to be a work of prodigious magnitude. Order is kept by a regiment of Cossacks stationed here for the purpose.

The road enters Nizhni through part of the fair. So we suddenly found ourselves rolling over an uneven sort of street, formed by shops of Siberian produce, and filled with heavy, slow-moving muzhiks,

or peasants. We drew up at the bureau des postes; and after waiting a few minutes, during which I was asked many more questions by the bystanders than it would have been possible to answer, we rumbled over the floating bridge across the Oka, and finally deposited ourselves in the Gostinitza, or hotel, immediately on the other side. Accommodation for travellers must have greatly improved during the last four years, for, contrary to Oliphant's experience, we found our quarters really good. It is true that we had the room swept, that we did not trust ourselves to mattrasses, and that we had to beat down the price to one sixth of that first asked; but after these preliminary operations we fared well enough.

From my window I had an excellent view of the bridge with its perpetual stream of carts, droshkies, and foot-passengers passing to and from the fair, and the curious collection of river craft on the water, from the huge Oriental-looking Astrakhan barges to the little canoes which ply across the river when the bridge is opened for the passage of the larger boats. The position of the house is most convenient for a stranger; in less than five minutes he may be in the midst of the fair.

On turning his steps in a direction opposite to that of the bridge, a very different scene presents itself. A stroll up almost any of the wooded glens at the back of the town, soon leads to the top of the hill, from whence a magnificent view is obtained. Nizhni, like Moscow, Kazan, and other Russian towns, boasts of a Kremlin; and a stroll on the terrace beyond it, towards sunset, on the eve of one's first voyage down the Volga, is one of the most enjoyable things that can be imagined. To the west may be seen the two rivers flowing slowly in long bright windings towards each other, and the Moscow road stretching straight and clearly marked through the forest, till everything is lost in the glorious glow that is shed over the horizon. Below us is the wooden town, hazy with the fine cloud-like dust which rises from morning till night in dry weather during the fair. The river looks busy with its various craft; sailing-boats dropping sleepily down the stream with their sails hanging loose in the still air; little steamers rushing about in all directions, some alone and some with long lines of barges behind them, which draw round into a curve as their tugs come to anchor opposite the town. The song of the sailors, softened by the distance,

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falls pleasantly on the ear. The river flows eastward, and to-morrow we hope to follow it.

There are about 2500 shops in the wooden town, and it is said that the number of people collected amounts to 200,000; but this, it would seem, includes the entire number of strangers during the whole time of the fair. Be this as it may, that which most interests a traveller, namely, the variety of the merchandise collected from both Europe and Asia, is unquestionable. Iron and copper from the Urals; tea, both the finer kinds and brick tea, from China; cotton brought by Bukharan merchants from India and China; furs from Siberia; and the varied produce of the Trans-Caucasian provinces, are among the most striking objects. As no one thinks of offering his goods, or even of telling what he has in his shop, the only way to proceed is to walk straight in and overhaul everything that may look interesting. In this way I ransacked some sixty or seventy shops, and at the end found myself the possessor of a Siberian carpet, a tin lantern, two cloaks of black Bukharan sheepskin, or karagasses as they are called, some tea, and three caricatures of the war. The last articles were sent back by an Englishman whom I met at several places on my

way hither, and whom I persuaded to come as far as Nizhni. Nothing, however, would induce him to come further.

It was near the close of the fair, and the lowering of the flag from the governor's residence proclaimed that it had officially terminated. A procession of ecclesiastics in full robes, and bearing banners and other sacred emblems, marched through the streets, to pronounce the blessing of the church on the business that had been done, and those who had transacted it, to hallow their gains, and last but not least (for this forms an essential part of a Russian's prayers) to bring future success. It was curious to watch, among the crowds of Christians who uncovered their heads and bowed, as the procession drew near, a few more Oriental-looking figures, with the proud independence of Islam, noticing its presence only by a curl of the lip and a toss of their turbaned heads. Many of the shops were already shut; but more than a fortnight elapses after the official termination, before the merchants and their goods have all left.

At this place I was very much indebted to Mr. Grant, an Englishman, resident director of the Volga Steam Navigation Company, who not only

pointed out to me many things in the fair which would probably have escaped my notice, but was also of great assistance in expediting the necessary formalities. For it is one of the principal petty annoyances in travelling in the interior of Russia, to have from time to time to change the passport. The rule is, that the stranger should obtain a fresh passport at the chief town of every government on his route. This is, however, not strictly carried out; and it is generally possible on any of the great routes to obtain one, available through more than one government, to the next principal point on the journey. Thus at Petersburg, passports were given this year either to Moscow or to Nizhni; from Nizhni I obtained one to Perm; from Ufa, chief town of the Government of Orenburg, to Astrakhan; from Astrakhan, across the empire, to Warsaw. But in all these cases I had the assistance of friends, without which it is more than doubtful whether the arrangements would have been made.

After a hard day in the fair, we retired to an excellent restaurateur, where a dinner worthy of a longitude much less than 45° E., wines, some ingredient of which, perhaps, came from Bordeaux

and the Rhine, and the cheery companionship of my English entertainer, made me forget that I was in Russia; until at a late hour we changed the shaven and white-aproned waiters for the long-bearded, long-skirted attendants at a native café, claret for tea, and a military band for the wild nasal tones of a group of gipsies.

I was fortunate enough to find a passenger boat starting, on the second morning after my arrival, for Kazan. The steamer belonged to the Samolete Company; but Mr. Grant was kind enough to introduce me to the captain, a Dutchman, formerly in the service of the Volga Company, an excellent officer, thoroughly acquainted with the difficult navigation of the river, and a most agreeable and obliging person. We were to start at 9.0 A.M.; but it was intimated to us that we should do well to be on board a couple of hours sooner, on account of the great number of passengers leaving the fair on their return home.

We accordingly rose at 5.0 on the 7th Sept.; and finding the bridge opened for the passage of some barges, we crossed the river in a small boat amidst much clamour and confusion of an admiring crowd, who were only restrained from personal in-

terference with our affairs, by a Cossack armed with a long whip. The steamboat quay is beyond the fair, and the whole of the low land on which it stands is overflowed in the spring. The companies are obliged every year to take down and rebuild their offices. The place must look desolate enough when the navigation is closed; but during the fair it is as bustling, if not as busy, as the Tower Stairs.

We were not the first on board, for the deck was already crowded with a curious collection of people. There were Russians from nearly all the Eastern Governments, Tatars from Kazan, Germans from below Saratov, Persians and Armenians from Astrakhan, Bukharans and Bukharan Jews from Orenburg, and one or two people on their way to Tashkend. I think that the variety of people collected at the fair has been rather exaggerated; for it is not generally the custom with the Asiatic merchants to come beyond the frontier. At Kiakhta barter is effected with the Chinese traders, at Orenburg with the Bukharan and Khivan, at Troitzk with those from Tashkend and Kokand. But, nevertheless, there are many of these foreigners settled at the principal frontier emporiums; and

it is they who are found at Nizhni. They are, for the most part, Russian subjects.

There were, however, enough on board to afford plenty of amusement during the two days' voyage to Kazan. If there were many rich merchants (and success in business is symbolically expressed by protuberance of stomach) in gaudy dresses crowding the deck, there were others still wealthier, and in still more brilliant colours, filling up the cabin. With dismal forebodings for the night, I threw down my pea-coat and plaid in a corner not yet occupied, determining to reserve to myself at least the choice between "potted humanity" and a Volga fog; in other words, between the cabin and the deck. From this dilemma I was relieved by the kindness of the captain, who insisted on placing his cabin at my disposal, in spite of what I believe to have been a very respectable show of resistance on my part.

If the costume and appearance of my fellow-passengers was novel, that of their luggage was at least as much so. Boxes and packing-cases, of every shape, from a coffin to a carriage-imperial; some of wood, others of bark, others overlaid with tinsel and tinfoil, others on which the whole flora

of a Chinese landscape seemed to have been portrayed; with bales, bundles, and bags, which made an English portmanteau look quite out of place.

As every one was on board an hour before the time, we were not unpunctual in getting under weigh; and soon after nine o'clock Nizhni was receding, and the sound of her bells died away in the distance.

The navigation of the Volga is very difficult, for the bed is broad and extremely shallow; added to which the sandbanks are perpetually shifting their position, so that a chart laid down one year would become useless the next. A thorough personal acquaintance with the channel, kept up by continual practice, is the only thing of any use. The captain of our vessel seemed quite at home in this business; he knew every turn and winding of the river, and every yard of the tortuous course which it was necessary to take in order to avoid running aground; moreover, he hardly ever moved from his post on the look-out. Some idea of the navigation may be formed from the fact that the windings of the steamer's course increase the distance between Nizhni and Kazan by about one half of its natural length.

My head-quarters during the day were on the paddle-box, whither I invited a few select friends, the chief of whom were L.; a Russian manufacturer from Murasi, about 120 versts S. E. of Kazan; and an officer of ways and communications, Captain Lan, stationed at Kazan. From our elevated position we commanded the whole of the deck and everything that went on. The most important business of all was transacted immediately below us, for there was placed the tea-table, with tea-pots, tea-cups, and tea-drinkers, from morning till night.

The business at the wood stations was better managed than it seems to have been in Oliphant's time; boats were ready as the steamers approached, came out alongside, and delivered their cargoes without delay. The thumping of the logs on the deck, however, goes on as heretofore, and no doubt waked the drowsy merchants in the cabin, while some of the more inquiring passengers were made to jump in a most unoriental fashion when they stood too near. In ten minutes a formidable-looking pile blocked up the gangway; but the greater part of it was soon stowed away below, and the furnace was not long in devouring the rest.

The weather continued fine, and the scenery is

everywhere pleasing. The low hills on the right bank are covered with wood of various kinds; pine, oak near Makariev, occasionally interspersed with elm and lime, already showing signs of autumn. The left bank is flat, with long yellow sandbanks near the water, and grass land and forest beyond.

Makariev, about 100 versts below Nizhni, on the left bank, is the first "Gorod," or town, that is met with on the voyage. It is a place of some antiquity; and the old monastery so literally overhangs the river, that it has been found necessary to support it with piles. The great fair which originally took place at Kazan, was held here for nearly three centuries; that is to say, from 1524, when the Tsar Vassili Ivannovitch interdicted Russian merchants from trading at Kazan. Like many other secular affairs in Russia, the fair was placed under ecclesiastical authority, and held within the precincts of a convent which stood on the spot. The destruction of the convent by fire in 1817 was the occasion of its being transferred to the present more convenient position.

At a village above Makariev there lately occurred an instance of the great wealth occasionally amassed by serfs. The man in question was worth

some five millions of roubles, and belonged, as I was told, to the late Prince of Georgia, who would never free him during his life. The present prince gave him his liberty, and he now possesses the grandest house in Nizhni.

A little below, a village was pointed out as belonging to the Starovertsi, or Old Believers. They are one of the many sects scattered about Russia; of whom, however, little is heard, in consequence of the jealousy with which they are regarded by the orthodox authorities, and the consequent reserve which they maintain on the subject of their peculiar tenets. They have always been an influential body in the country; so much so, indeed, that Peter the Great thought it worth while to persecute them and oppress them with double taxation. This impost, however, having after a few years fallen into disuse, Catherine II. and her successors, to the present time, have used every endeavour to reconcile them to the Established Russian Church, but without success. With their religious tenets, which are founded on the letter of the Bible, and are Judaistic in many particulars, they combine an opposition to all change in national ideas, customs, and even dress. Among the more grotesque points of

their faith, the following may be mentioned. They never shave or cut their hair; holding it, with Tertullian, an act of impiety to disfigure by art the head and face which God has given to man. The use of tobacco and potatoes is above all things to be abjured; for the latter are the flesh of the traitor Judas, and at the same time the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden, while the former is an incarnation of Satan himself. They have frequently come into collision with the government on account of their recognition of priests under the censure of the Established Church, to whom they have given an asylum, and whom they have employed to superintend and ordain ministers for themselves. The inconvenience arising from some of these acts, has occasionally become so great as to be regarded by the government in a very serious light; and as late as in the year 1838, four of their colleges were broken up by military force, and their inmates removed to Siberia. Their principal establishments are, as may be supposed, towards the east in the less settled and more imperfectly organised parts of the country, such as the Governments of Saratov and Orenburg, and in Siberia. The doctrines of this peculiar sect are received principally among

the merchants and manufacturers, and find but little favour with the nobility or peasantry.

We anchored late at night somewhere near Kozmodemiansk; but I had been driven below some time earlier by a cold Volga mist. Having taken refuge in my comfortable quarters, the captain's cabin, I finished the evening with writing letters, and reading some old Galignanis, the last scraps of European news that I was to see for some time.

In the morning, and at midday, and at sunset, the opposite paddle-box was peopled by the Muhammedans, who, there, by the captain's permission, assembled to perform their devotions. It sounded strange and uncouth to our European ears; but still none of us were inclined to laugh, as, with their faces towards Meccah, they prostrated themselves before Allah; as they opened their ears that they might hear his words, their nostrils that they might receive the inspiration of his Spirit; and as humbly and reverently they repeated the words which, through a thousand years and over half our hemisphere, have been a witness, amid many forms of polytheism, of the one Living and True God.

I was awakened the following morning by the tramp of a Tatar in a pair of wooden shoes over-

head; and having indulged in what later in my journey I should have thought a most unnecessarily elaborate toilette, I resumed my place on the paddle-box. The tea-drinking was as brisk as ever; it seemed as if it had never ceased, and as if a whole Volga of the beverage must be flowing through the vessel.

At Tcheboksar we took in wood for the last time; from this point it usually takes seven hours to Kazan, but we were longer on account of the unusual number of passengers on board. The scenery on the second day was prettier than on the first; the hills were better formed and the wood more varied. Below Tcheboksar there are considerable forests of oak. There is little good pine timber near the river; as the best has generally been cut and sent to Petersburg, and even to Archangel, for ship-building. Considerable numbers of wild ducks are seen on the water, and the country on the left bank is famous for bears.

For the last twelve or fifteen versts before Kazan the river flows along a straight reach, at the further end of which the town may be seen, as it were, drawing gradually into view and rising out of the waters. Two days in a steamboat, even

in fine weather and on such a river as the Volga, are enough. But I was sorry to part with my companions; even the dignified old Bukharan, who only after several hours entirely forgave my having sketched him at tea; the sly-looking Tatars, who were in some degree accomplices in the crime; the sheepish-looking fellow from Tashkend, whom I used to chase laughing about the deck with my opened sketch-book; and, above all, our Dutch captain, who had a good English shake of the hand to offer before we left.

About 5.0 P.M. on the 8th of September, we reached the landing place, which is five versts from Kazan.

The town looked exceedingly well as we drove along the rough track over the meadow land between it and the river. Even after Nizhni, the place did not seem to lack beauty; its different position, and the old Tatar tower, — a piece of antiquity, nearly, if not quite genuine, — gave it a new charm. By holding on very tight to the droshky which carried us, I could, without fear of being thrown out, take my last look at the Volga, as well as keep an eye on the squinting Tatar and his cart in which our luggage was depo-

sited. We drew up at the Razanov Gostinitza, where if folding doors, mock-damask curtains, French-fashioned sofas, and a card table, were the elements of comfort, we should have been in luxury. But it was with the greatest difficulty that we could persuade the helpless waiter — the final cause of whose existence seemed to be to bow and stare — that man could want anything else here in Russia. One basin and two towels, extorted by many coaxings, threats, expostulations, and appeals, were literally every article of bedroom furniture and convenience that we could get him to add to the above inventory. Later in our travels we dispensed with many items which Western prejudice considers necessary to comfort, health, and cleanliness; but at first our curiosity was interested in bringing to an experimentum crucis the question of how much or how little a Russian hotel was capable of furnishing for a traveller.

Our first step was to go to the house of the manufacturer, whom we found nearly ready to start "out of town" for Murasi. He was very kind, and directed his two servants to accompany and advise us, the next morning, in buying a tarantasse or travelling carriage.

Afterwards we strolled up some of the long, straight streets, which run through the whole length of the town; and, struck almost to melancholy with its appearance of silence and desolateness after the gay crowds of Moscow and the busy life of Nizhni, we sat down on the Kremlin ramparts. Clouds were already beginning to overcast the sky; but the moon, nearly at the full, still battled with the darkness, and the lights of the town, scattered over the hill, made the place look more cheerful than it had appeared by daylight. People should never talk in the dark, at all events on the Kremlin ramparts at Kazan; for whether it was the darkness, or the old Tatar tower, or the general inspiration of the place, I know not; but I certainly found myself talking of ancient history, Bulgarians, Finnic, Sclavonic, and Indo-Germanic migrations, with considerably more eloquence than erudition.

CHAP. II.

KAZAN.— THE TARANTASSE.— THE SIBERIAN ROAD.— RUSSIAN YAMSTCHIKS.—ROADS.—THREATENED DANGERS.—SIBERIAN EXILES.—PERM.

KAZAN, as is well known, was formerly the capital of a Tatar Khanat, commonly called the Kingdom of Kazan. It was founded about the middle of the thirteenth century by Batu or one of his sons, nearly twelve versts from the present city. The old town was burnt, in 1391, by the Grand Duke Vassili Demetrievitch; and forty years afterwards the then Khan of the Golden Horde, being driven out of his possessions, settled on the present site. But there was no more peace subsequently to the change than before; and after a century and a half of war, treachery, and bloodshed, the present town was taken by Ivan Vassilievitch, and finally subjected to Russia. From that time the Tatars have had assigned to them, as their quarter, the lower part of the town, near a little lake called the

Kaban. The town was burnt during the civil war in 1774, but was rebuilt by Catherine II.

The total Tatar population of the Government of Kazan is said to be 230,000; that of the city about 13,000, or one third of the entire inhabitants. Some 2000 or 3000 have received baptism. Their principal manufactures are articles of leather and soap. The best Muhammedan education is sought for at Kargala, a village twelve versts north of Orenburg, or at Bokhara.

Kazan is, amongst other things, celebrated for its manufacture of carriages. The demand for them is considerable, on account of its being the point, on a journey eastward, most convenient for beginning posting. The railway between Petersburg and Moscow, the new chaussée to Nizhni, and the steam communication on the Volga, have all combined to divert the traffic between the capital, the Eastern Governments, and Siberia, from the old route by Kostroma and Viatka, to that by Kazan.

The travelling carriage used generally throughout Russia is the tarantasse. It is a four-wheeled vehicle, with a body which has been compared to that of a barouche without doors; but which, at least in the case of mine, more nearly resembles a

broad, low-built boat truncated at both ends. It is furnished with a hood, or other leathern apparatus for closing in; and has a coach-box in front, capable of holding one passenger beside the yamstchik or driver. The purchaser who is a novice in the subject, is a little astonished when, having been told that his vehicle is quite ready for use, he finds that there is no seat whatever inside, and that he must in future sit upon his luggage. He however soon finds out that if he is not most conveniently placed on the top of his portmanteau, his portmanteau is at all events most conveniently placed under him, as they are not so likely to part company as if it were outside. But the peculiarity which forces itself particularly on the notice of the traveller using a tarantasse for the first time, is the fact that it has no springs, and that, instead, the body is placed on several long poles which reach from the fore to the aft axletree, and act, or rather are supposed to act, as substitutes. But the play—and at the time, one is inclined to call it by a much more serious name than play—of the wooden poles is so different from that of steel springs, that had we not been told beforehand, we should certainly have failed to recognise any resemblance. There was, of

course, a puzzling choice between strength and lightness among the tarantasses which we found ready-made; but, having had some experience of a rather infirm carriage between Warsaw and Petersburg, I decided in favour of the former; and, after the usual amount of bargaining, and a solemn shaking of hands, agreed for an herculean vehicle at the price of 170 roubles. I am inclined to think that a lighter one would have answered quite as well, even in the north; in the south it would certainly have answered better; but we had a long journey before us, and the cost of a few repairs would pay for an extra horse over a considerable distance; besides which the consciousness of strength saved us many an uneasy hour in the cross roads of the Ural.

While L. was laying in provisions, and making other arrangements for our departure, I went to call on Captain Lan, whose agreeable little wife was in a state of consternation at her husband's return. She was preparing a little surprise in the shape of new paper and whitewash to their house, which would have been complete had he delayed his journey as long as was expected. In spite of the rain, he kindly insisted on taking me a drive through

the Tatar quarter of the town, and showing me some mosques, butchers' shops for horseflesh, and the house of a wealthy Tatar. The latter was filled with a curious mixture of furniture in both the Oriental and French styles. The sitting-rooms were furnished with chairs and tables; the bed-rooms with richly coloured divans and huge piles of pillows; while the stoves were constructed in the form of Mecca shrines. The owner of the house insisted on my writing my name and address, although he could not read a letter of it, or in any way realise the position of my country. Beside these my acquaintances, Kazan contains among its inhabitants a professor of English, and a free-trade political economist.

On my return to the inn I found that our preparations were nearly complete. Large quantities of provisions had been laid in: bread, cheese,—Cheshire is sold at Kazan,—cold chickens, chocolate, tea, sugar, wine, brandy, &c. For on the road nothing can be calculated on but a little black bread, a kind of food decidedly to be eschewed when better can be had.

About 6. 0 P. M., on the 9th of September, everything being on board, we left Kazan in a cold rain

that would have done credit to a November day in England.

Here, then, we were fairly off in Russian fashion on the Great Siberian Road. Imagine a great broad way cut out of the forest, some seventy or eighty yards wide. In the centre is a space marked out as the road itself, Bolshoi doroga, or the Great road; this consists of a broad strip of the natural soil, denuded of all vegetable growth for a breadth of perhaps thirty yards, and left hard, soft, rough, or smooth, as it may please itself and the winds and rain of heaven. And somewhere within this space may be seen a track, narrow and wheel-worn, winding its way so as best to avoid lumps and hollows, rocks and quagmires, and marking out the practicable course for the driver. On either side of the road is an open space, intended to give the traveller a chance of seeing his enemy before being attacked, be that enemy man or beast. Wherever the country is at all open, and even in the less dense parts of the forest, a double line of birch trees has been planted on either side; these have attained to a very considerable size, and, wherever the road undulates or winds, have a most pleasing effect. They contrast remarkably in both

form and colour with the dark Siberian pine (*Pinus Picea*), and the fir (*Abies*). Amongst these various kinds of growth we may almost recognise a type of the domes and spires of the Russian church architecture. The bridges are made with logs laid across the longitudinal timbers; but as there is seldom any attempt at hewing or squaring, the jolting, as the carriage passes over them, is very great.

As far as Malmyzsh, 138 versts north-east of Kazan, there is a good deal of cultivation, after which the road passes through the great forests of Viatka. These are the finest and most striking on the road.

The posting on the Great Siberian Road is the best, excepting that on the chaussées, in Russia; the horses are plentiful and spirited, and so are the drivers. Now the yamstchik knows but one duty in life, viz., to go from his own station to the next; and this he performs as if his soul were dependent on each single journey. He is lodged, fed, and clothed by the government; so he need have no thought for the morrow, and he has none. His normal state is to be on the road; and it is a matter of utter indifference to him whether he be called

out during day or night, fine weather or foul. I have heard them singing unconcernedly at night, to keep themselves awake; or holding a chatty conversation with their horses, and addressing each by its name, when the storm has been driving hard against us through the forest, or the wind and the rain have been sweeping over the steppe; when we, even inside, have wrapped ourselves in our furs, and crouched silent in the least breezy corner of the tarantasse, not trusting our tongues with an expression of our feelings. And more than once, on our return, when the winter weather had set in, and the wind and the snow had encased horses and driver with a sort of mail-coat of ice, they have come up at the end of the stage, laughing, as heartily as a schoolboy, at the fun of it. They have often been abused by travellers, who complain of their stupidity, obstinacy, dishonesty, and recklessness; but I confess that my experience was different. Out of some 300 or more that I employed in various parts of the country, there were not above half a dozen with whom there was reason to find fault. The traveller must not expect inteligence from them, nor even the more refined good qualities that may be learned in a country of civili-

sation and education; but they drive very well, they have a just appreciation of the doctrine of rewards and punishments as carried out in their "na tchai," or "na vodka;" i. e. "for tea," or "for brandy," drink-money; and cases of intoxication at their work are extremely rare. In my entire journey I met with only two who were not in a fit state for driving; and even they managed to reach the end of the stage without accident. When a glove, or some little wrap, has been lent them in very rough weather, the faces of the poor fellows have brightened as if some new sense had just dawned upon them; and never, in any such instance, have I known the slightest attempt at purloining the thing lent. But thoroughly to appreciate this last trait, one should have experience of the thieving in Russia.

The misfortune, however, is that these fellows, once *en route*, care nothing about your bones, and, what is worse, nothing about the carriage. The horses put to, and everything in order, away they go at a canter, which, if mud permits, soon ripens into a gallop. Whirr go the wheels, and pleasant enough it is when the road is smooth; but except on the steppe, far away from towns and cultivation, ruts,

mud, and general unevenness, are the order of the day. But these things are not the worst; the traveller soon begins to be very keen at seeing the little streams, with their ominous-looking bridges, ahead. Bump, bump, go the fore wheels over the logs; immediately your feet, and the wrappers that envelope them, commence a little "voyage autour de la voiture" on their own account, while the small luggage and provisions fly in dismay in all directions. But this is only a prelude to the passage of the hind wheels: then, indeed in Homeric language, do your teeth chatter, the joints of your limbs are loosened, your dear heart makes unwonted leaps in your breast; and your head, exalted by the convulsions of your little world, strikes the firmament of the carriage.

We had been told, on leaving Kazan, that the roads were not very safe; that several officers had lately been attacked and robbed; with many other similar stories. And it may be mentioned here, once for all, that throughout the eastern part of the journey, till we reached Riazan on our way home, we were everywhere warned of the danger we were incurring. Sometimes it took the form of exhortation not to continue the journey at all; some-

times not to travel at night; sometimes, to take the most unheard-of precautions; sometimes, as if that were of any use, the most circumstantial details of the last robbery were recounted to us just as we were starting; how the postillion fled, how one man was stabbed, &c., &c. But in spite of all this, throughout nearly five thousand miles of Russian posting, in various parts of the empire, we were never once molested. I mention this for the sake of future travellers; because there seems to be no reason whatever for the most amateur tourist to alter his course on this account, although it is sometimes difficult at the moment entirely to divest oneself of some general impression of risk. We carried revolvers, and took care to show not only that we carried them, and that they were loaded, but also that we knew how to use them. We made it both our business and amusement to take shots at some of the many ravens and magpies that are to be seen almost everywhere on the road and especially near the villages. As may be imagined, the amount of execution done was very disproportionate to the ammunition expended; but whenever one of these birds did fall to our bullet, the postillion would thank his patron saint, or the Prophet — according

as he was Christian or Moslem — that he was not the Englishman's target; and stories of our prowess, which doubtless did not lose by repetition, were told for stages afterwards. How far these precautions were really necessary it is difficult to say: both private persons and officers certainly did travel armed on these roads; but the arms of the civilians — often an unmanageable musket, and an old cavalry sabre, or an apopletic-looking pistol — could never have been of much service.

In spite of the jolting, which for the first few days is very annoying, it is a grand sight to travel through those forests; the dark pine-points stand clear out against the sky, and, day after day and night after night, seem hurrying away behind us in a never ending train. The weather is cold and dreary; but this seems in accordance with the road by which we are travelling: we are on the high road to Siberia; we have not seen the sun for two days, but at night the moon has sometimes shot out fitfully between the clouds, and shown the majesty of the darkness. Occasionally we are awakened from a broken sleep — for we sleep by turns, and not too soundly during the first few nights — by a deep red glare, and flames leaping

out even above the tallest trees: are we far away at home among the iron districts of England, or are we coming to the "lake and mouth of Avernus?" The forest is on fire. Presently the chill grey morning draws on; and beneath the double row of birch trees, which seem drooping to shelter them as they pass, is a long line of drab-clad figures marching in the same direction as ourselves. We instinctively know what it is, but can still hardly believe that a story so sad, so strange, so distant, is being realised before our eyes. Near the post-house which we are approaching, there is a palisaded building; and here, comforted by the contributions of the sympathising peasantry, they rest themselves for awhile from their weary march. Ten thousand annually — such, at least, is the number officially stated — pass this way; and of them one fourth find their last resting-place in life, before reaching their destination.

The mines of Nertchinsk, in Eastern Siberia, are 4472 miles from Moscow; and thither the exiles condemned to the most severe punishment are still sent. And although the rigour of the system there has been considerably mitigated, yet the eight hours' underground work in the silver mines is far from a

light punishment. But it must not be supposed that all traverse that immense distance, or that all are subjected to the same treatment. The severity of the punishment is proportioned to the heinousness of the crime of which they are convicted. One of the most painful parts of the penalty which the exiles undergo is the march; for it is performed entirely on foot, and frequently in most inclement weather. Stations, where these wayfarers either eat or sleep, are maintained at distances varying from fifteen to twenty versts; and here, besides the Stchi, or soup, provided by government, the peasants of the neighbourhood are in the habit of bringing their contributions for the comfort of the convoy. But, in addition to the power of shortening or lengthening the march by one half, according as the place of deportation is in Western or Eastern Siberia, the latitude may be varied through some twenty degrees, as far southward as 44° N. The southern parts of the Governments of Tobolsk and Tomsk are not ill-adapted to agricultural pursuits; while part of the new district of Semipolatinsk, south and east of Lake Balkash, has already acquired the name of Siberian Italy.

It was curious to find ourselves not only so far

east, but on the road to places far beyond. At one place we fell in with a merchant going, like ourselves, to Ekaterinburg; at another, a man on his way to Tobolsk; then a third, bound for Kiakhta, where he said he should arrive in twenty days, if he was fortunate enough to find horses; at another place we were hailed by an officer just arrived from the Amur. He was very anxious to hear everything about the coronation, as he was much disappointed at not reaching Moscow in time for it. Poor fellow! he had had a weary time of it, having left the Amur five months previously, and fallen ill of fever at Tomsk. He described the travelling through the eastern part of his journey, Mandchuria, as very tiresome; they used rein-deer, but as there were no relays, they could only make thirty or forty versts a day, and were obliged to give the animals twenty-four hours' rest every two or three days. The heat during the day and the cold during the night were often excessive.

The third morning from Kazan, the 12th of September, was fine and bright, although cold. The forest looked gay with rich autumnal tints, and the air was like that of a clear morning at the end of October. From some high ground, before the

last station, Kultaieva, there is a fine view of the valley of the Kama, cleared in many places for cultivation, and Perm in the distance. In spite of the bright morning the whole scene had a very northern aspect; the appearance of the villages, surrounded with stout wooden paling, and shut in with gates to protect both men and cattle against wolves and bears, the houses strongly built with unsquared timber, and small windows and doors, all contributed to the effect; nor did the character of the town, which we reached at half-past eleven A. M. in any way diminish it. Perm is entered by a gateway, the side posts of which are crowned with pinnacles cased in sheet tin, which glitter surprisingly in the sunshine, but, after all, look only like the sign of a whitesmith's shop. The streets, as is universally the case in Russian towns, are broad, and set at right angles to one another, and contain a number of showy buildings; but after driving through a few of them, the traveller is astonished to find himself suddenly at the end of the town, with nothing between himself and the forest. This is particularly the case on the north or river side. Here a row of houses of some pretension, containing, among other things, the post-house and a very re-

spectable hotel, stands facing the Kama; a little footpath leads down the rough grassy bank; at the top is a collection of country carts laden with Siberian goods; at the bottom a few small boats, communicating with the steamer at anchor. This is not the boat in connexion with that which brought us to Kazan; for although by land the traveller reaches Perm in three days, by water he is fortunate if he arrives in a fortnight or three weeks. Beyond the river is a virgin forest, stretching out to the tundras and the Icy Sea.

Three days and nights, my first in a tarantasse, on the worst of roads I had ever yet seen, with posting so well appointed that we had no delays or slow progress, and cold wet weather into the bargain, delivered me at the station in a rather shattered condition; and I was not sorry to find the hotel in connexion with the post-house, really comfortably arranged and furnished, with one front to the river, and the other to a little sheltered garden which looked almost warm and southern-like in the sunshine. The house was built and kept by an Englishman, who was originally the successor of the Howards in their boarding-house at Moscow: he opened his establishment at Perm a few years

ago, but since that time the governor of the place had been changed, and enemies — in short, a long "engineer's story" followed. The poor man came to see me as soon as he heard that an Englishman was in the place, and it seemed quite a "white day" with him, during his long-continued stay for winding up his affairs.

It was necessary here to change our passports for others in order to enter the Government of Orenburg; and as the process took twenty-four hours, I had the satisfaction of mentally abusing the slowness of the officials and corporeally recruiting my strength at the same moment. There were two young officers in the house, occupying the warmest and quietest room; on hearing that I was rather knocked up, they immediately removed themselves and their luggage, and then placed the room at my disposal. They were just starting on their way northward for a second time, having on the previous day sounded a laughable, although, no doubt, very wise and necessary retreat, from a party of six bears, who had occupied the road at no very great distance from the town.

With our passports once more in order, we left Perm in the afternoon of the next day, and soon

exchanged the lights of the town for the stars of heaven, and the noise of the post-house for the sound of the night wind as it strode through the forest.

Bukharan on the Volga Steamer.

CHAP. III.

FIRST SIGHT OF THE URALS. — THE PASS. — EKATERINBURG. — STONE-WORKS. — MANUFACTURE OF ARMS. — MINT. — ASIATIC SIDE OF THE URALS. — ZLATOUST. — FACTORIES. — SATKINSK.

"Видите Баринъ! Уральскія горы."

"Пойди къ Чоршъ! оставь меня."

"Sehen Sie nicht die Ural Gebirge am Horizont?"

"Ich sehe die Sonne, wie in das Heimathsland, von die Nebeln hinaufgehen. Lassen Sie mich noch träumen."

"Mais, Monsieur, après avoir parcouru toute la Russie pour voir les Urals, ne vaut-il pas la peine de les regarder?"

"Mais, donc est-ce qu'ils s'en iront?"

"Well, Sir, shall I just give them a salute with my three remaining barrels?"

Whether it was the appeal made in English, or the prospect of a revolver going off close to his ear, that produced the effect, it is perhaps difficult to

say: but certain it is that at this stage of the conversation the sleeper awakened, and, with slowly returning consciousness, distinguished far off on the eastern horizon the blue outline of the Urals.

The Urals are first seen at Atchitskaja, about halfway between Perm and Ekaterinburg; and at Bisersk, the next stage, the outlying ridges may be said to begin. The forest growth in this district is much more open than we had found it in Viatka, and on approaching the mountains the pine generally gives way to the birch. Between Bisersk and Klenovsk there are picturesque Scotch-like glens, looking very pretty at the time we traversed them, with their autumnal tints. The country undulates to the beginning of the pass itself, and we again and again lost sight of the main range as if we were never to reach it. In the neighbourhood of the villages the forest is often partially cleared for grass and meadow land, leaving patches of wood here and there almost like an English park. The road is execrable. At the foot of the main ridge the road crosses the Tchusovaia, a small river of some importance. Its two branches rise on the two sides of the ridge in which are situated the copper mines of Gumeshevsk, a little more than forty miles south of

Bilimbaevsk, where it is crossed by the Siberian road. After having skirted the western slope of the Urals in a northward course through nearly a degree and a half of latitude, it turns to the west and falls into the Kama twelve or fifteen miles above Perm. It is navigable, at least in spring, almost from its source, and is consequently of the greatest importance for the transport of the heavy produce of this very rich district. At the manufacturing village, or Zavod as it is called, of Bilimbaevsk, are the great iron-works of the Stroganov family. Ten versts further on, the road crosses a little tributary to the Tchusovaia, the last stream belonging to the European basin. After passing a little to the south of Mount Beresov (there appear to be two of the same name, one west of Kirgishansk), and over a shoulder of Mount Volska, which rises to a height between 1100 and 1200 feet above the level of the pass, the road finally descends; and, at a distance of about thirty-one versts from Bilimbaevsk, and twenty-three from Ekaterinburg, a little distance west of the village of Reshetsk, it crosses the Lesser Reshet, a tributary of the Isset, the first rivulet of the Asiatic side. The Isset joins the Tobol at Yalutorovsk on the road to Omsk, the Irtish at Tobolsk, and the Ob at a point midway

between that city and Beresov; whence the waters, collected from the Ural, the Kirghiz Steppe, the Alatau, and the Altai Mountains, flow together to the Arctic Ocean. At a little distance south of the road, the Tchusovaia and the Isset approach within four versts of each other; and it was once proposed, by a short canal at this point, to unite the water communications of the Caspian and Arctic Seas. The project has not, however, been carried out.

A traveller always hails fine weather; but there are some places which it is a pity not to see also in foul. So at least I consoled myself when a threatening cloudy day followed the bright one on which we left Perm. The clouds, which had hung on the eastern horizon in the morning and mingled themselves with our first view of the Urals, were now spread over the sky, and sailed rapidly past on the gale which reached us in short gusts down the mountain glens. About dusk we entered a denser part of the forest; and the yamstchik, who kept a sharp look-out on either side, presently pointed out to us two wolves that had come prowling out on the greensward between the trees and the road. Some months later it might have been rather a serious affair; but at this season the wolves have plenty of food and are not dangerous, so that their appear-

ance only served to add to the effect of the picture. These beasts, as well as bears, are more dangerous in the early spring even than in winter; for as long as there is any herbage even under the snow, some cattle are to be found in the open country, and they are generally the first objects of prey.

About midnight we reached Bilimbaevsk; and having stayed there a few hours in order to have daylight for the pass, we started again towards 5.0 A. M. Although in a picturesque point of view the pass is absolutely uninteresting, yet it cannot be without some feeling of excitement that for the first time in his life a traveller crosses the last little stream of Europe, and, descending the eastern slope of the Urals, takes his first draught of the waters of Asia.

There is so much sameness about Russian towns that it is often difficult to offer any particular description of each. The height of the churches compared with the ordinary houses, their number, their domes, the fantastic although perpetually repeated forms of their spires, all combine to make a pleasing outline when viewed from a distance. But it is like a mirage; as soon as one has entered, one wanders about the broad dull streets and the great waste squares, where the dust floats about like a fog, or

the mud lies deep and still, vainly trying to recover the charm that has been lost.

Ekaterinburg, however, differs from many other places; it stands on undulating ground, it is scattered about and interspersed with trees, and a small lake penetrates nearly to the centre of the town. The number of manufactories, with black furnace-smoke and steam or water power, give a striking appearance to a place so distant, and approached by such a savage route.

We were lodged in the house of an Italian, Frate by name, who has lived there some five-and-twenty years, and keeps a comfortable sort of boarding-house; is an excellent, good-natured fellow, especially to any one who can talk his native tongue; and furnishes what is an unexpected phenomenon in Russia, namely, good coffee.

I had several letters of introduction to the inspectors, &c., of the various works in the town, all of whom contributed to make my stay both interesting and agreeable. For these letters I was indebted to an Englishman, a great Siberian traveller, the reminiscences of whose former stay at Ekaterinburg seemed to be of the pleasantest kind.

In this place are several government manufac-

tories. The first which we visited was that for the cutting and polishing of stones and marbles. There was not, however, much going on at that time; the machinery was under repair, and there were but few hands at work. A fine jasper candelabrum was nearly completed: its design was in good taste, but devoid of originality. In spite, however, of the slackness of the works themselves, the clerks' bureau seemed as well filled as if every department throughout the factory was in active operation. The wages of the men employed here are very low, and are paid partly in money and partly in corn. I was told by one of the sub-inspectors that the money payment was as little as from two to four roubles assignats — that is, little more than from two to four shillings — a month. They, however, work for themselves at home, and often have very tempting specimens of stone, beads, necklaces, bracelets, chimney and table ornaments, &c., for sale. At several of these places we made purchases of malachite and other stones, which may be bought at very reasonable prices.

Among the precious stones and marbles from the neighbourhood, of which we found specimens at Ekaterinburg, were topaz, bluish-white, pure white

of a fine water, and the brown or smoke topaz; yellow beryl; purple amethyst; rock crystal; "Siberian diamonds"; jasper of various kinds; porphyry; and malachite. Beside these, stones are brought here from the Altai, and even from Nertchinsk, to be cut and polished; and occasionally lapis lazuli, after its long journey from Badakshan and the south of Bokhara, may be bought.

Beside the stone-works, we visited the manufactories of machinery and of arms, and the mint for copper coinage. In the last a considerable quantity of coin is made, but the machinery is clumsy and the work not well finished. Soldiers, far from terrific-looking men themselves, but armed in a terrific style, mount guard at the locked doors, lest any of the shining kopecks should prematurely find their way into circulation. But, in spite of all precautions, the men and boys manage to secrete and appropriate a few pieces from time to time. A collection of coins from an early date is also shown here, and is interesting as exhibiting the gradual depreciation of the copper coinage at various times, and even as recently as within the last six years.

The manufactory of machinery adjoins the mint, and is under the immediate superintendence of an

Englishman. The whole of the machinery, such as lathes, planes, &c., employed here, was brought from England, excepting one or two pieces which have lately been made from the English models.

The upper part of the same building contains the manufactory of small fire-arms. An Englishman was formerly employed in the superintendence of this department also; but he left at the beginning of the late war. These works are now under the management of a German. Belgian machinery is used for making, boring, and finishing the barrels.

It seemed curious, after seeing the last English traveller depart westwards from Nizhni, to walk round these remote works with a fellow-countryman, talking one's own language, and alluding perpetually to the engineers of London and Glasgow; comparing his prospects in Siberia with his chance if he returned home; and above all, looking over the Illustrated London News which we found lying on the table at his house. He seemed not ill-satisfied with his present position, nor with his chances for the future. His present salary is 350*l.* per annum, with house and firing. It had lately been raised; and it seemed that the authorities would be very unwilling to lose his services.

Beside the government establishments there are also several private manufactories. One for machinery belongs to an Englishman, Mr. Tate, who was unfortunately absent at the time I visited Ekaterinburg, but whose German wife was most hospitable. A large lathe, lately constructed by him, is at present in work at the dockyard at Astrakhan.

While at Ekaterinburg, I had the pleasure of making acquaintance with General Odinetz, Inspector General of the Ural Works, Colonels Stroleman and Weitz, and Dr. Thieme, directors of the various government factories in the town; all of whom contributed to make me regret that my stay was not longer; and future travellers cannot do better than present themselves to any of these officers. Dr. Thieme, in spite of his protestations to the contrary, understands English.

The ultimate destination of the manufactures of this place extends over a very large area. Water communication is, as was before explained, practicable from the western foot of the mountains to the Volga, and thence over the greater part of European Russia. From the factories of Ekaterinburg and Zlatoüst, the arms for all the tribes and frontier forces of Siberia are supplied. In the same work-

shops the engines, and even the iron steamers themselves, for the navigation of the rivers and inland seas and lakes of Asiatic Russia, are made. The metal is found at inconsiderable distances; coal is procurable, although of inferior quality; and charcoal is abundant. With these advantages it requires only capital, and energy in employing it, to make the mining and manufacturing districts of the Ural important, not only in Russia, but in the commercial economy of the world. The principal iron mines are at Nizhni-Issetsk about ten versts to the south, and at Kamensk ninety versts to the east of Ekaterinburg, near the river Isset. The copper for coinage is brought from Bogoslovsk in the neighbouring mountains, and from the vicinity of Perm; the former of these localities is by far the most productive, and is said to yield three times as much as the latter.

The gold district, as at present worked, extends over about eight degrees of latitude from 52° to 60° N., and is almost exclusively confined to the eastern side of the Urals. It is at present worked in about twenty places, in some at a considerable profit, in others at scarcely any profit at all. Encouragement is held out for the discovery of fa-

vourable localities; and new washings — for washing is the principal method adopted — are not unfrequently established, and old ones discontinued when their yield diminishes.

But the whole region is so rich in minerals of all kinds, that the reader who is interested in the subject should consult the very complete Table of Minerals in an appendix to Sir R. Murchison's "Russia, and the Ural Mountains."

We left Ekaterinburg about 5.0 P.M. on the 17th of September, taking the country road (the "grand chemin praticable" of the Russian post maps), for Zlatoüst. The posting on these cross roads is rather a different sort of affair from that on the regular government posting routes. The stations are not so well supplied with horses, and the traveller has no padaroshna to appeal to, nor is there any "black book" that he can call for in order to register his grievances. But as these roads often lead through the most beautiful and interesting parts of the country, it is worth while occasionally to follow them; besides which, every person curious on the subject of Russia should once, at least, "make experience" of them, if it is only by way of information.

We were now fairly travelling southwards, and a great satisfaction it was to us after so much cold weather. It was not merely that we were about to change our latitude a little, but that we were to face the sun instead of having it on the back of the carriage, and were to have some shelter from the north wind instead of having it streaming in upon us night and day. The morning broke fine, and the sun shone so cheerily, that for the first time we opened the carriage to enjoy it. The eastern side of the mountains is very pretty; a simple kind of agriculture, and the peasants busy about the ingathering of the harvest, made a pleasant change after the Birmingham of the Urals. Near the road is a series of long winding lakes with villages on their shores, fringed round and backed by natural birch woods; behind them is the main chain, with its slopes covered with pine forest, and some of its higher crests standing out in bare serrated quartz rock against the sky. The four principal lakes are Silatch, Irtiash, Urveldi, and Argasi; the first two of which almost form one long continuous and winding sheet of water. The road also passes between two others, Miasovo and Turgoyatsk; but these I did not see, as it was dark

when we passed. The stages are long, but the horses went well, and we rolled rapidly over the smooth, springy turf. But, as will readily be understood, it was not merely the fine day, or the good horses, or the springy turf, or the sun, or the lakes, or the forests, or the mountains, which gave so much interest to the scene; but the fact that we were in Asia. From the great undulating plains towards Troitzk, and the salt steppes on the military frontier, the sun came up in the morning, and looked upon us in Asia. When he first rose on our route, it was still dark throughout all Europe; on Palestine, and Egypt, and the Syrian Desert, the morning had not yet broken; the eastern headland of Arabia might just be growing visible in the dawn; and the first rays of light might be gilding the battlements of Herat. And yet though we were so far east, the towns, and the people, and the aspect of the place were not nearly so oriental as at Orenburg, or at Astrakhan, nearly 500 miles further west.

It was a "black" day in our journey when we turned again westward towards the mountains to leave Asia, and after some five days' sojourn found ourselves once more in Europe. Of course on

leaving the low country and entering the mountains again, as we do a little before reaching Miask, we meet with rough roads. The last stage to Zlatoüst is long, steep, and bad; so much so that, although there was a moon, we were some hours making the distance, and did not arrive at our destination till 3. 0 A.M. of the 20th of September. The red glare of the furnaces of Zlatoüst formed a striking contrast to the moonlight by which we had been travelling, as well as to the rich glow which had shed itself about sunset over the plains of Asia. It seemed as if we had literally fallen upon an iron age, and that the golden and the silver ages of evening and midnight were for ever gone.

Trusting to the guidance of our yamstchik, we drew up at the door of a dingy-looking house, and roused the inmates. We thought ourselves fortunate when we found that it was the place which had been recommended to us, although it was not improbably the only house of entertainment in the town. It differed little in uncleanliness and inaccommodation from a Russian habitation; but it is kept by a genial old German and his wife, and their faired-haired daughter. Their name is Haase. They made us as comfortable as they could; and as we were now in some degree accustomed to the ways

of the country, they succeeded quite to our satisfaction. L. and the young lady, whose long, loose-flowing locks entirely captivated him for the time, made some excellent coffee for breakfast; after which he occupied himself with superintending some repairs of the carriage, while I went to see the manufactory of arms.

The neighbourhood of Zlatoüst was the most picturesque part of the Urals in the journey. A little southward of it are some of the highest peaks. Mount Iremel, which is actually visible, rises to the height of 5075 feet; Mount Yaman, still further south, to the height of 5400 feet. The latter is, I believe, the highest point of all. The range here consists of three nearly parallel chains; the eastern of these, which is rich in granite, porphyry, and many mineral productions, is called the Ilmen Mountain; the central one, lying between Miask and Zlatoüst, is termed the Ural; while the western, the highest of the three, is known as Mount Urenga. The watershed of the range, which is in several places curiously displaced, is not here determined by the highest ridge; for the river Ai, which runs northward along the long, deep valley between the Urenga and the Ural ridges, turns westward at Zlatoüst, and finally discharges

itself into the Ufa, a tributary of the Kama. Zlatoüst, although standing in the valley of the Ai, and closely shut in by the surrounding mountains, has an elevation of nearly 1200 feet; the air has a fresh mountain character, but, considering the position, it is not very cold.

Zlatoüst and Miask were founded last century, after the establishment of Ekaterinburg; the former for the working of iron, the latter for copper. The name of Zlatoüst signifies "golden mouth;" and it has been remarked as a curious coincidence that the place was so called before the discovery of the very considerable masses of gold which were subsequently found in the neighbourhood. But the exact locality of these treasures was Miask, not Zlatoüst. This immediate district, as well as the greater part of the Southern Urals, has gradually passed from the hands of the Bashkirs to those of Russians. When the riches of the country first became known, a variety of purchases were made by private individuals. Land was thus obtained at very low prices from the Bashkirs, who were little aware of the value of the property with which they were parting, and as little able or disposed to undertake any operations on their own account. Instances are mentioned of the enormous profits

made by these transactions; thus the valley of Soimonovsk was bought, in the early part of the present century, for a sum under 50*l.*; and the works have been known to yield upwards of 4000*l.* in a year. These transfers could not fail, after a time, to attract the attention of the government; and an ukase was accordingly issued, absolutely forbidding the purchase of land from the Bashkirs. The excitement of the discoveries was not, however, checked by any such measures; and a variety of joint-stock gold mining and washing companies, often consisting of government employés, were formed; the land for these purposes being leased from the Bashkirs. The rents themselves were generally very moderate; but as the consent of every individual interested in the ground was made a preliminary condition of a lease, it was often necessary to pay a considerable sum as a douceur to the less willing or more crafty chiefs.

By far the greater part of the town is built of wood; but many of the government buildings, both manufactories and inspectors' residences, are of stone. The principal place is the arsenal or manufactory, and the depôt of small arms, which are manufactured here on a considerable scale. Ekaterinburg, as was mentioned above, is famous for its fire-arms;

Zlatoüst is equally celebrated for its swords, bayonets, and cuirasses. It is said that 30,000 blades of various kinds are annually turned out from this factory. The majority are long cavalry, or, as they are there called, Bashkir swords, for the supply of the Cossacks and irregular cavalry on the frontier. Some finer kinds, with Damascene and ornamental gilding and engraving, for officers and for the Asiatic market, as well as daggers and knives for military use and decoration, are also manufactured and sold. Here, as at Ekaterinburg, a considerable number of German artisans are met with. I did not, however, find a single Englishman in the town. In all these imperial factories there are large stores of tools, such as saws, files, planes, chisels, &c., entirely of English manufacture.

The workshops for arms, which had of course been in very active operation during the late war, were, at the time I visited them, again in their normal state; and many of the hands had been distributed among the other factories, all of which seemed to be undergoing a thorough repair preparatory to a more vigorous working.

Some very ingenious and tasteful specimens of local produce and manufactures, such as ornamented steel blades, may be procured from the artisans at

their own houses. The stones of the neighbourhood supply substantial and handsome material for handles. But it is curious that while every other substance used in these articles is procured near at hand, the gold for inlaying, although also procurable in the immediate vicinity, is in fact brought from a distance. The entire gold produce of this region is now declared crown property, and is not allowed to come into the hands of private persons. If we had had any spare English sovereigns, we might have disposed of them advantageously to some of the manufacturing artisans to be melted down and used for ornamental work.

We left Zlatoüst at 9. 0 A. M. of the 22nd, and mounting by a steep rough road over the shoulder of Mount Urenga, we obtained a fine view of both sides of the valley of the Ai. The colouring was most rich, and the higher peaks were capped with snow. Arrived at Satkinsk, I sought out the residence of Captain Temnikov, inspector of the iron-works, to whom Dr. Thieme had given me a letter. He lives at a house prettily situated near a lake outside the town. At breakfast we got on very well, as all difficulties were interpreted by his wife, who speaks French. But afterwards, when he showed me round the zavod, or manufacturing village, it was not so

easy. Nevertheless, his good nature and quickness made many things intelligible, which must otherwise have remained unexplained. The mines are at the distance of three or four versts, and the smelting is performed at the zavod itself. Some of the ore is very rich; one kind produces forty, and another sixty per cent. of metal. The machinery for hammering and rolling is the same as that used at Zlatoüst.

Zlatoust.

CHAP. IV.

BASHKIR COUNTRY.—MOUNTAIN ROADS AND POSTING.—UFA.—OUR CICERONE.—AN ENGLISH LADY.—PASSPORT FORMALITIES.—PRECAUTIONS AGAINST HIGHWAYMEN.—ROAD BY STERLITAMAK TO ORENBURG.

FROM Sat'kinsk there are two roads leading to Ufa: one the main post road, longer and more circuitous; the other a cross country route, leading directly through the mountains, but shorter by one fourth than the other. The difference was so great, that, contrary to advice, we decided on the latter. The two routes diverge at a distance of about twelve versts from the town; at which point our yamstchik pulled up, and began expatiating on the superiority of the longer route. When he found that this had no effect, he enlarged upon the difficulties of the other: "It goes through the heart of the Bashkir country;" and in the mouth of a Russian of the Ural, a Bashkir is the name of everything that is of evil report. "The road is very bad, and the people are wild;

there are Cossack pickets down below." I do not know whether the last sentence was intended for a caution or consolation; but having given my ultimatum for the mountain road, we immediately turned short to the left off the main road, and bounded away over the turf. We had a capital team of grey horses, and our yamstchik was a master of his art. Eighteen versts more down a broad valley with open forest growth, performed in little more than an hour, brought us to the first station — a Bashkir village. It was now nearly dark; and we were soon surrounded by a crowd of wild-looking figures, with strange Mongol contour of features and picturesque dress. How many there were it was impossible to determine in the dark, but it seemed as if the whole village must have turned out to see us. They spoke their own language, and few of them could muster a word of Russian. However, we were in for it, and we could not well have turned back even if we had wished it. So we fresh loaded our pistols, urged on the relay, and were soon off at as good a pace as before. After all, nothing particular happened, and on the whole we liked the Bashkirs fully as well as their neighbours who so abused them.

The men generally wore a long shirt or smock-frock with a jacket over it, and an embroidered skull-cap. A few of the richer persons had bright-coloured Bukharan robes, made of silk and cotton woven together. Their houses are much cleaner than those of the Russians. Besides which, we were perpetually reminded that we were among a non-Russian tribe by the regulations and other little pieces of writing, which hung in their rooms, being in oriental character; as well as by pictures of the great mosque of Bokhara taking the place of views in Petersburg and Moscow.

On this road there were no bridges; we forded the smaller rivers, and were ferried over the larger. But some of those which we had to ford occasionally looked rather formidable. It was about 2. 0 A. M. after leaving Satkinsk that I was roused from a nap by the carriage drawing up on the bank of the river Yursen. On watching proceedings, I saw our postillion take one of the horses, and, having mounted, ride him into the water to try whether it was fordable. In answer to our inquiry he told us that it was practicable; and although his tone was not the most reassuring, we called out as usual, "Paidiom — poshaul." But this was not all

with him; before adventuring into the river he kneeled down upon the grass, and, bowing himself to the ground, prayed for safety and success, in the opening words of the Koran, "That the Lord of all creatures would direct us in the right way; in the way of those to whom he has been gracious, and not of those against whom he has been angry, who go astray."

There are four kinds of roads recognised in the Russian post maps: the Glavnaia pochtovöia doroga, or grand post road of the empire; the Guberuskaia pochtovöia doroga, or post road of the (local) government; the Uyézdnaia pochtovöia doroga, or post road of the district; and the Proözzhaia bolshoi doröga, or "grand chemin praticable." On the first three of these the padaroshna system holds good, and there are regular relays of horses; but on the last, there is only a kind of self-constituted post on the part of the peasants. As every one in Russia, whether rich or poor, drives instead of walking, no farmer is without horses, and every farm servant can, on an emergency, act as postillion. And on this account it is far from impossible to make one's way through the country in a carriage in almost any direction. The difficulty, as may be imagined,

varies very much with the season of the year; and at harvest time, or in corn or commercial districts, at the season of transport, the horses are so much employed that it is difficult to obtain them.

On this road we were often detained a long time at the stations, not by the usual excuses of the post-masters on the government routes, but by the necessity of sending to catch the horses, which were generally out loose in the pastures or the forest. Our arrival at a village was the signal for a temporary cessation of all work,—if, indeed, there were any going on at all,—and for a general muster of the inhabitants round the carriage. After a few minutes' consultation, two or three of the younger and more active men would gallop off, mounted on rough little ponies, and presently return with a little troop of horses which they drove in before them. Then came the discussion about the number which were to be yoked to our tarantasse. A troik, or three horses abreast, is the normal team; but when the roads are very bad, and speed is required, four or five are usually taken. A fourth horse is harnessed abreast of the troik, by means of a piece of wood which any one in Russia can cut out of the forest and tie on to the splinter bar in a few minutes. But the

yamstchik, who is accustomed to driving three, is not very skilful in making the fourth horse pull well with the others; so that the addition of it does not materially add to the efficiency of the troik. In the case of five horses, the two extra animals are harnessed in front, with a second yamstchik. The villagers used to begin with insisting that eight were necessary, because the tarantasse was large, and we were great people, with a number of other reasons relevant and otherwise. L., who by the bye had never been within a thousand miles of the place before, would profess an intimate knowledge of the country, and the powers of the horses, if not from personal observation, at least in some *à priori* way. And although it was always obvious from the first how the discussion would end, I was obliged to maintain a dignified silence till the proper moment, and then calm the troubled spirits by authoritatively commanding a compromise in favour of five horses. The roads were certainly very heavy, steep, and rocky, and the horses very small; so that we were satisfied with the result.

At Simsk, another zavod, while we were waiting for breakfast, the police master presented himself and asked for our passports. Having made a show

of reading mine very attentively, and thus satisfied his dignity, he returned them. I afterwards heard at Ufa, that this person had confused the two facts, that I was "Directeur, &c.," and that I was going to Orenburg; he had written to a friend in a great state of patriotic indignation, because an Englishman had been appointed "Directeur, &c.," at Orenburg, to the prejudice of all good Russians. Various other reports were circulated at different times, indicating a certain degree of suspicion at my appearance in that part of the world; but I have still no reason to be otherwise than obliged for the treatment which I generally received in the interior. My great difficulty consisted in conveying the idea to them of travelling for pleasure and amusement alone. On arriving at any place the following conversation would take place: "I believe you are the Englishman?" "Yes." "From what place have you come?" "So and so." "Where are you going?" "So and so." "What are you going to do there?" "Nothing." "But what is your object in going?" "None, excepting to see the place." "But why do you want to see it?" "For amusement." "But there is nothing to see there," &c. &c.

After crossing a line of hills which looked dreary enough in a driving rain, the road turns down a wooded valley, which gradually narrows towards its lower end, and terminates in a gorge of great beauty. On each side were hills thickly clad with pines, folding prettily behind one another; and in the middle was a bright rocky stream. Had the rocks and the water confined themselves to the hills or the river bed, it would have been well enough; but, to our grief, they intruded themselves continually, and at the most inconvenient points of the road. The existence of our wheels at the end of it was a triumph of wheel-work. In the rough notes of this part of the journey there appears a memorandum, very distinctly written, to the effect, that the traveller intends, next time he is advised by a postillion to take the better road, to follow the advice. More experienced travellers may guess how long such a determination is likely to last.

From the gorge, the road issues westward on an undulating plain covered with brushwood. The transition is perfectly sudden; and it was near sunset when we left the hills. From the grey shadow of the glen, we passed at once into the full glow of a Danby-like evening. We were now among

the most western spurs of the Ural chain, and looked back almost with regret at every slope that sank successively on the horizon.

We reached the station of Nizhni-Lemezi after sundown; and finding that the next stage was long and mountainous, we agreed to wait till dawn. The station was a solitary log-built house, containing but two rooms. That on the right was appropriated to strangers, that on the left to the family. Both were large, rambling chambers, much more like stables than anything else. The corner where we sat by the glimmer of our own lantern was sufficiently lighted to show the moss-caulked joints of the log walls, and the two little portholes which served for windows; but the roof and the more distant parts of the room were never very thoroughly explored. It was Sunday evening; and as I was preparing to lie down full of those mixed feelings and thoughts which the traveller does best by keeping to himself, the sound of singing fell on my ear. It was a beautiful hymn, sung beautifully by the whole family in the next room. The intervening walls may have softened it a little, but at the time it sounded very well. On going into the room whence the music came, I

found it large and square, and surmounted by the roof of the house itself. It was lighted by some chips of wood suspended on little chains hanging down from one of the beams. A strong Rembrandt sort of light fell on a group of figures, consisting of the man, his wife, — a good motherly old woman who in her own rough way took no little care for us, — and some five or six boys and girls strewed about the floor and the wooden benches. The parents were clad in the universal sheepskin; the children in drapery more statuesque than ample. I should have stayed and asked for another hymn, had the atmosphere been bearable.

We started again soon after 3.30 A. M., by moon and starlight, and toiled over one of the most tedious of stages. Our road lay across a considerable hill, and was steep, and rough, and boggy, in turns. The country was covered with a luxuriant growth of oak, birch, elm, and alder; the boughs of which were in many places festooned with wild vine. The next stage, to Kasimova, although not so steep, is heavy with mud; but the lowland forest makes an agreeable change after a thousand miles of pine. We at last emerge upon an undulating country, with many villages and much cultivation. There was

some difficulty in finding horses, as the harvest was going on, and almost every animal was at work. We reached Ufa about 1.0 A.M. on the 24th of September, and after some trouble found ourselves lodged in what we afterwards learnt was the best gostinitza in the town. Whatever else might be wanting, it was at all events warm; and after taking some tea, and fastening the doors as well as we could with some nails and string, we stretched ourselves on the benches to enjoy the luxury of a night's rest.

The next morning, on going out for a stroll before breakfast, we found the town already in a great state of excitement about us. Moreover the official news of the coronation had just arrived, and three days' fête was proclaimed. This gave every one time to come and stare at the strangers. Not that the commercial activity of Ufa seemed to be such as to offer any serious impediment to the population in doing so on any occasion; but a considerable concourse of people always *happened* to be about when I walked out. On making inquiry for some one who could interpret for us, and assist in negotiating the matter of our passports, a squat, yellow-faced, dandified-looking old fellow, in a blue and brass coat,

figured satin waistcoat, black trousers and cane, was produced. He was a Pole, and professed the greatest willingness to do anything that might be required, until the subject of the Governor or the Police was mentioned, when he brought forward a hundred excuses for having nothing to do with us. He, however, soon found a fellow-countryman, a soldier, who had no objections to governors or police officers, and who undertook to put us in the right way. He was serving in a regiment of Poles, which was quartered there, just as in Warsaw there are regiments of men from the eastern part of the empire. The only objection to our new acquaintance was, that he managed to get rather drunk in the course of the afternoon with the remains of a little spirit that we had bought to taste, and which seemed to us as strong and as like poison as anything could well be. When in this state his loquacity knew no bounds. We could have forgiven him if he had communicated any interesting information, or, indeed, any information at all; but when in this state his conversation had no point and very little meaning. As the coronation festivities were going on, we were told that there would be no business on that day; and we were further informed, with a

rather unsatisfactory sort of grin, that the rejoicings would last two days longer.

The town stands on a high promontory formed by the Bielaya and the Ufa rivers. The principal part of it stands on the upper ground, and is built in the usual way, with broad streets set at right angles, and huge squares. But the suburbs spread southwards down two or three little ravines to the river, and combine very prettily with the wood which has not all been cleared away. On the high ground to the westward there is a monastery, and from the natural terrace beyond it the view of the plains of the Diema and the Bielaya is beautiful. A few rows of wooden houses, in the middle of the great square on which the gostinitza stands, form the market. We ransacked nearly every shop, but did not meet with anything very curious or interesting. All the principal articles of grocery, crockery and glass, clothes, &c., had been imported from Moscow, or some of the governments to the south of it. For a lemon of the driest and most unpromising-looking description, half a rouble, or about 1*s.* 7½*d.*, was asked.

At this place I had no letters of introduction; but in the course of the afternoon L. discovered a Russian lady, whom we had met on our way to

Nizhni, and who had given us her direction in case we should find ourselves at Ufa in the course of our wanderings. She invited a number of her friends to meet "the Englishman," who, however, spent a very dull hour amongst the smoking papirosses (cigarettes) and unintelligible conversation of some five-and-twenty Ufites. But by far the most amusing, as well as the most useful, of our acquaintances was a Dutchman, Dr. Bertrand, and his English wife. We were sitting after dinner, the day after our arrival, when the door was opened by a short, white-haired gentleman, with keen eyes and perfectly un-Russian appearance. Having asked the usual question, and received the usual reply, he proceeded to explain that his wife, on hearing that an Englishman had arrived, had sent him to find us out. As they had lived in Ufa for upwards of fifteen years, and had in the course of that time heard two or three reports of the arrival of English travellers, none of which had proved true, the Doctor refused to pay attention to his wife's suggestion, until she announced her intention of going in person if he persisted in declining. Her house was open to us during our stay, and her husband's time at our disposal; and I only hope that the appearance of a fellow-country-

man gave her as much pleasure as she said it did; for I had no other means of requiting her hearty welcome, or her husband's ready assistance.

Any one who has gone through the trouble of the formalities attendant upon a change of passport in the interior of Russia, may imagine how infinitely the difficulties are enhanced by the occurrence of three days' of feast and rejoicing at the moment. No one is at his office, and no one has any obligation or inducement, except what the applicant may himself offer, to bring him there. Moreover it is not one or two persons who can perform the business, nor is it merely one bureau through which it must pass. The civil governor and the police have separate offices; the old passport is delivered up at the latter and forwarded to the former, and both are involved in the issue of the new one. In order to make the first step towards negotiating the change, the exact locality of the old passport must be discovered; then some one must be sent to buy the stamped paper required (for none is ever kept at the office); then another person hunted out and persuaded to write the document; after which, a variety of signatures, ending with that of the governor himself, have to be affixed. The process is wonderfully

expedited if a friend known to the authorities will take the matter up and follow it through; for everything seems to be done as a matter of favour, nothing as a matter of course. In this, our friend the Dutchman was of the greatest service. The governor, also, was really obliging; he put our affair forward at once, and at one or two stages where it threatened to stick fast, he himself sent peremptory orders for its progress. But the passport is not the last of the traveller's troubles. Before he can make a step on his journey he must procure the padaroshna, or order for horses; and this can be obtained only after the completion of the other documents, for the padaroshna is issued only for the route leading to the place indicated in the passport. It was considered a great feat to get all these affairs completed in the day.

The day before I left, Mrs. Bertrand gave a feast, at which both the dinner and the company were as English as circumstances would permit. Our country was represented by the hostess, another English lady married to a Russian, and residing at Ufa, and myself, as well as by roast beef, and plum pudding flaming with brandy, to the astonishment of the rest of the party. The conversation natu-

rally turned upon the route which we were about to take, and, as usual, a great deal was said about the difficulties and dangers of it. Our throats were to be cut, many other things were to befal us, and we were never to reach England again. The Doctor and his wife had been attacked more than once upon the very road which we meant to take. (To tell the truth, this was very reassuring, for if they could come safe out of these dangers, we thought our chances not very bad.) But if, in spite of all warnings and remonstrances, we were determined upon risking it, they would recommend some precautions which had at times served them in good stead. Let one of you have ready at a moment's notice, a large box of snuff, and the other a carving fork. On the appearance of the robbers throw the snuff in their eyes, and while they are blinded and stupified with the dust and pain, poke hard at them in the face with the fork. With a wistful glance at the huge instrument which at that moment stood upright in the beef, and with all the gravity at my command, I heartily applauded the ingenuity of the arrangement. Had our friends been less satisfied with their own plan of self-defence, the affair would have been spoilt by a remark made by

L. about revolvers being more to the purpose; but, as it was, this only produced a long explanation on the part of the Doctor, how it was not permitted in Russia to kill a man who attacks single-handed; how in the case of two men attacking, remonstrance must be made, &c., &c. The conversation ended in a discussion upon Russian law, on the details of which I expressed a strong wish to remain in ignorance. In the evening there were illuminations and a representation at the theatre, where of course we went, apparently much to the amusement of the people. As a parting consolation, my hostess delivered me a letter for her brother in London, giving utterance at the same time to the most dismal presentiments as to its fate.

The next morning at six o'clock we left Ufa, passing through a hilly country with much cultivation. The harvest of hay, as well as oats, barley, and peas, was going on. The view, looking back at the town after crossing the river, was charming. At the top of the hill, which slopes green and grassy to the river, except where it is so steep as to be broken into cliffs, are seen the monastery and barracks; to the right several little ravines filled with trees, houses, and churches; in the foreground a broad meadow land, not entirely

cleared of trees, backed by a thick line of willow and other growth along the river. The weather was fine, and the road excellent. To the left across the Bielaya, spurs from the Urals and single peaks are frequently seen. The course of the Bielaya is curious; it rises between Mount Iremel and Mount Yaman, two of the highest points of the range; and after flowing southward through nearly a degree and a half of latitude, turns westward and then north through the same distance; thence it takes a north-westerly direction, and finally discharges itself into the Kama. It is, however, very shallow, and even at Ufa is navigable only by the small boats of the country. The rivers of the Ural range are remarkable for the longitudinal direction of their course, and several for the complete change of direction which they undergo on leaving the mountains. This was noticed above in the case of the Tchusovaia. Nearly all the western waters are collected in the Kama

Although Sterlitamak and Sakmarskoi Gorodok are both marked in large letters on the map, there is no place of importance between Ufa and Orenburg. Some of the villages on the road, and within sight, are very large; but they are only villages, and contain no buildings beside the pea-

sants' cottages and the church. The woods cease a little south of Sterlitamak; and the houses in the open steppe country betray sadly the want of timber. Brushwood where it can be had, and reeds from the banks of the streams, wattled together and plastered with mud, take the place of the substantial logs of the north, and are made to serve even for roofs as long as the wind and rain will allow them.

The country, at first hilly and wooded, gradually presents less elevation and fewer trees; and the last half of the distance to Orenburg is undulating and bare. The scanty cultivation was just ended for the year, and the Bashkirs were collecting themselves and their carts in large parties to return from their summer encampments to their winter quarters. Great troops of horses, from 200 to 400 head at a time, are to be seen almost wild on the steppe.

It was towards evening that we first saw Orenburg. The sun was going down behind the low blue line of hills, the Obtchei Syrt, on our right; the last spurs of the Urals still stretched out towards us from the left; and in front, on a slightly rising ground, we could see the outline of a walled town, with its churches and public buildings rising high above the fortifications. It had quite an oriental appearance.

CHAP. V.

ORENBURG.—EXPENSE OF KEEPING A CARRIAGE.—ASIATIC TRADE.—COMMUNICATIONS WITH CENTRAL ASIA.—ROUTES TO ASTRAKHAN.—VALLEY OF THE SAMARA.—COSTUME.—CHILDREN OF THE PEASANTS.—ADVENTURE WITH A BAD POSTILLION.—SAMARA.—NIKOLAIEVSK.—RECROSS THE VOLGA.

ORENBURG, the residence of the military governor of the district of that name, dates from the establishment of the "Orenburg Line," or military frontier, in 1738; and its original position was at Orsk. This being found an unsuitable place, it was removed in 1741 to Krasnogorsk, about 120 miles to the west; and finally in 1742 to its present position. It stands on the right bank of the Ural river, which throughout its course is considered to form the boundary of Europe and Asia. At the point where the town stands, the river has changed its bed; and between the two channels there is a large grove of limes, black and silver poplars, &c. The trees are fine and well-grown, and make a pleasant shady walk on a hot day. A foot bridge

immediately below the governor's palace leads across the river. The town itself, which is about a verst square, is fortified; but a considerable suburb, with a market, warehouses, and shops, has grown up outside. The streets of the suburb have been set out in Russian fashion; straight rows of wooden houses, built opposite one another in true town style, terminate abruptly on the sheer steppe. It has exactly the appearance of a Dutch toy on a green cloth.

Immediately below the grove, the river is crossed by a floating bridge of the usual description; and two versts beyond is a large caravanserai for the reception of the numerous caravans which arrive here from the south and east. The entire space is enclosed by a wall forming a large square, containing sheds, magazines, shops, a church, and a mosque. The duties are paid here, and all the goods are marked with a Russian custom-house stamp. There are two entrances; one intended for Europeans, the other for Asiatics.

The traveller will find himself very comfortably lodged in the hotel, which, by the bye, he cannot mistake, as it is situated in the principal street, and is the only one of which the town can boast. He

will not be badly attended to if the landlord be at home: he will live well, and although at a tolerably high rate, not exorbitantly, if he knows what to avoid. But if he insists upon wine, he will probably pay fifteen shillings a bottle for what he would give the same sum afterwards not to have tasted: and unless, like ourselves, he buys a loaf of sugar for the journey at the grocer's next door, and commences upon it at once, he will find an item of eighteen pence for the few small lumps that he has demolished every time he has called for the samovar. Above all, there is that which no English traveller will easily forget,—a good iron camp bedstead.

It may seem trifling, as we sit at home, to go through all these minutiæ, or to give a thought to luxuries; but at the time it is different. One cannot, even on a tour like the present, much more on a serious journey, be too careful of one's comfort. A little unnecessary fatigue, or a slight derangement of system which might have been avoided, may interfere with some expedition for which an opportunity may never recur; or may make the traveller apathetic or incapable of observing what he will never see again. And, indeed, few people,

who have not tried themselves, would be inclined to believe how much effect may be produced on the mind and spirits by short commons or the loss of a single meal. I speak, at least, from my own experience, having at times discovered even a difference in my own notes made before and after breakfast or dinner.

But fantastic varieties of price in Eastern Russia are not confined to the walls of the hotel. If the happy possessor of a hundred lemons could only dispose of his stock-in-trade at Ufa; or if a grocer at Orenburg were to devote so much of his capital as, invested in sugar, would satisfy half-a-dozen guests next door at their samovar morning and evening for a week, in "making himself respectable," he would be able to keep his carriage, horse, and coachman for an entire year.

We were here befriended by M. Curvoisier, a Swiss, teacher of French and German in the military college, an intelligent and agreeable man. He was, however, about to leave in consequence of the oriental languages, Arabic, Persian, and Tatar, being substituted for the European in the academical course.

Caravans arrive at Orenburg from Bokhara,

Tashkend, Kokand, and occasionally from Khiva. The inhabitants of the steppe on the left bank of the Ural, are the Khirgiz, some of whom are always to be seen about; Uzbegs, also, from the southern parts towards the frontier of Persia, now and then make their appearance.

The Russian commerce with Asia may be conveniently grouped under the following heads: China, Persia, Kirghiz Steppes, Asiatic Turkey, Bokhara, Khiva, Kokand, and other countries. With all these localities trade is carried on, but of very different extent. The total Asiatic imports, for the four years ending 1853, are stated in the official returns at about 2,400,000*l.*, the total exports at 1,600,000*l.* Of this trade, that with China represents one half, that with Persia somewhat more than one sixth, that with the Kirghiz Steppes one seventh, while that with the remaining countries amounts in the aggregate to no more than one seventh. From China, tea is by far the greatest article of importation; from Persia, Asiatic Turkey, Bokhara, Tashkend, and Khiva, cotton and silk, both raw and manufactured; from the Kirghiz Steppes, cattle and sheep. In return for these articles Russia sends to China woollen and cotton goods, and other

articles nearly to the extent of the imports; to Persia, iron and silk of the Caucasus; and the latter article also to Asiatic Turkey; to all the other localities cotton goods; and to the Kirghiz Steppes, also wheat and dressed hides. During the ten years ending 1853, the official tables show that the exports to Asiatic Turkey have been tripled, and that those to the Kirghiz Steppes have increased three fourths.

As the subject, which is one of considerable interest, is apart from the object of the present work, the tables given by Tegoborski are quoted in an appendix.

Official tables, however, are far from representing what a traveller may expect to be able actually to buy, still less how he should make the purchase. For instance, although goods to the extent of 214,300 silver roubles were imported from Khiva between 1849 and 1853, I could not at Orenburg, after many inquiries, get hold of a single article. Bukharan goods seemed plentiful, those from Kokand less so; but this doubtless arose from the latter class being imported principally at Petropavlovsk and Troitzk. Among the most striking objects are the large loose Bukharan robes, brightly

coloured, of silk and cotton mixed; some of the patterns are simple stripes, others a series of prismatic hues zigzagged and arranged in what can be described only as a "thunder and lightning" pattern. Caps, boots, handkerchiefs, and carpets may be found in abundance.

Beside the articles mentioned above, various other pieces of manufacture may be found here. The Cossack women along the line knit very pretty woollen shawls, exactly like those made in the Shetland Isles; a useful kind of camlet is made on the steppe from the hair of the camels; and I bought an embroidered prayer carpet made by the Kirghiz, both the pattern and colouring of which were extremely good.

From the frontier of the empire there are two main routes to Bokhara, starting from Orenburg and Troitzk respectively. They lie nearly parallel as far as the Sir Daria river, the ancient Jaxartes, and are distant from one another from 150 to 200 miles. A branch from Orsk meets the Orenburg road about half way between the latter town and the northern gulf of the Sea of Aral. On leaving Orenburg the road passes eastward of the salt mines of Iletskaia Zatchita, and follows the course of the Ilek to its

source. After crossing the Mugojar hills, which separate the valley of the Ilek from that of the Irgiz, it joins the Orsk road at Karabutask. At this point a Russian fort has been built. Thus far the route is tolerably easy and sufficiently well watered; but beyond the fort the country becomes more arid and desert-like in appearance. It is interspersed, it is true, with a great number of small lakes, but the waters of many of them are salt. About midway between Karabutask and the sea, there is another Russian station strengthened by the Fort Uralsk; and from hence a cross road diverges to meet the Troitzk and Bokhara route, at a point where Fort Orenburg has been built. After reaching the sea the road leaves the shore again for Fort Aralsk, the lowest Russian station on the Sir Daria, and about forty miles from its mouth. A road follows the right bank for a distance of nearly 300 miles, in a straight line, and 400 by water, to Fort Perovski, the highest of the five stations established on this river. The line between Forts Aralsk and Perovski, like that between Forts Uralsk and Orenburg, connects the Orenburg and Troitzk roads.

The Sir Daria has been navigated by steam as far as Fort Perovski, and is said to be navigable by ves-

sels of small draught as high as the town of Kokand itself, or nearly a thousand miles from the mouth. Little of this river beyond Fort Perovski is known to Europeans; but whether it be navigable by steamers much beyond this point or not, it is unquestionably a line of communication of the utmost importance with reference to Central Asia.

The Amu Daria, which rises among the Bolor Mountains in Badakshan, and after passing about forty miles north of Balkh, seventy south-west of Bokhara, and lending its waters to form the oasis of Khiva, falls into the southern bay of the Sea of Aral, is said also to be navigable through a great part of its length. But the geographical details have as yet been so imperfectly explored, that it is impossible to give any very satisfactory account of them.

It would seem, however, that the Sea of Aral offers, in proportion to its magnitude, similar advantages for river navigation towards the south and east, that the Caspian does towards the north and west. And it would be an interesting point, with reference to the limits of the ancient Aralo-Caspian Sea, to ascertain whether the banks of either the Sir or the Amu Daria present any phenomenon analo-

gous to that of the Volga between Nizhni and Tsaritsin.

As all these regions are beyond our present limits, I will only add that in order to reach the Sea of Aral, or even to make any considerable excursion on the Kirghiz Steppes, the traveller will find it necessary to be furnished with a passport from the military governor of Orenburg, as well as with necessaries of every kind, for the expedition; for the scattered population are extremely poor, and nothing can be reckoned upon after crossing the Ural.

During the summer there are two routes from Orenburg to Astrakhan: one by Samara, and along the right bank of the Volga; the other following the right bank of the Ural, by Uralsk to Guriev, and thence by steamer on the Caspian. The steamer runs twice a month during the summer, and ceases for the winter on the 15th (27th) of September. Between Guriev and Astrakhan there is no post; but the journey may be performed in a carriage, by buying horses and taking a person acquainted with the country, in ten days or a fortnight in favourable weather. The distance is about 240 miles. This information was obtained at Astrakhan; at Orenburg we could learn nothing, except that Guriev is

a wretched place, and that we must not reckon upon getting anything there. We were told that the post-master at Orenburg knew a great deal about the country, and could tell us much that would be useful; but he was absent at the time. The Samara route was in some respects the more interesting, as it led through some of the chief corn districts of the Volga, and the German colonies between Saratov and Tsaritsin. After much discussion we finally decided upon following it.

We left Orenburg between four and five in the evening of the 27th of September, with a long and rather dreary journey of 1100 miles before us. Rain came on as we started, and the postillion had never been on this road before. He was, moreover, a bad hand at his business, and managed to let us stick fast in trying to get up the muddy bank of a stream. When once in a difficulty of this kind, Russian horses are not very helpful. If one of them is induced to make a start, it by no means follows that the rest will do the same; and after a jerk and a plunge, which produces no effect, he stands still again as unconcerned as the others. It requires a man with some ideas about the way of using his reins, and with great powers of lung, to produce

simultaneous action. Our Jehu had none of these requisites; and it is impossible to say how long we might have remained *in statu quo* had not a peasant passing by been persuaded to take the horse out of his cart, and help to pull us out of the mud. Stories of highway robberies were plentiful and circumstantial, but as usual ended in nothing. The night passed as we dragged slowly over the heavy ground, and slowly got relays at the little-frequented stations; and the morning broke, bringing a thick mist upon the steppe, and the prospect of a thousand miles of mud before us. At the station Tatistcheva, sixty-one versts from Orenburg, the road leaves the river Ural, and with it the Guriev route, and crossing the Obtchei Syrt hills, descends into the valley of the Samara. This river rises at a little distance to the right of the place where the road crosses the hills, and flowing in a north-westerly direction, falls into the Volga a short distance below Samara.

As we advance wood becomes scarcer, and mud and reeds more plentiful; and at Novosergievsk, the third station after leaving the Ural, sunburnt bricks are found as a material for building. Some of the villages are very large; for instance, that next after Novosergievsk is three versts and a half in

length, — a most wearisome business. The only thing which broke the monotony of the street was a gallows-like erection in front of one of the houses, on which were hung three bells. This indicated that the house, which was not in any other way distinguished from the rest, was the village church. On the right bank of the river is a line of hills, which with all other country visible, is steppe-like in character. In the valley itself the pasture is magnificent; cattle, sheep, and horses are seen in great numbers; and at one time two herds of the latter, amounting together to some 400 head, were visible at once. A single Cossack seemed to be tending them.

Buzuluk is in no way interesting to the passing traveller, except so far as marking that he has made fully 200 versts from Orenburg. At the point where the road crosses to the left bank of the Samara there are some water-mills for grinding corn, very prettily situated at the foot of steep and wooded banks. Rough, uncouth-looking figures, with long shaggy hair and beards profusely powdered with flour, lean out of the windows of the mills and storehouses, to stare at us as our horses struggle up the muddy hill towards Borsk. And if it be fair to judge from the shoulders of one figure

and the legs of another, their dress is not the heaviest of their expenses in life.

These were the mill men; the others were clad in the universal sheepskin, boots, and hat. The costume of the women, however, is often picturesque; and, even in some of the most hopeless-looking villages of this remote district, the gracefulness of their drapery and head-dress was worthy of Italy itself. A brown-white unbleached tunic would be varied by a rich dull red mantle thrown over it; and the bright hues of the handkerchief tied about the head would enliven the more massive colouring of the rest of the dress.

But in the life of a Russian peasant there is a period anterior to all tunics, mantles, and even sheepskins, during which they live a kind of mummy life, only, unlike the Egyptian, it is the first instead of the last stage of their existence. For the youngest children are always swaddled, and rolled up tight in bandages, so that they may be conveniently put away without risk of getting themselves into mischief or danger. On entering one of their houses an enthusiastic traveller thinks he has come upon some pagan tribe having their idols and penates with the heads well carved out

and the rest of the body left in block. He looks curiously at one laid up on a shelf, another hung to the wall on a peg, a third slung over one of the main beams of the roof and rocked by the mother who has the cord looped over her foot. "Why that is a child!" cries the traveller with a feeling similar to that experienced on treading upon a toad which was supposed to be a stone. "Why, what else should it be?" answers the mother. Having learnt so much in so short a time, the inquisitive traveller wishes to inform himself about the habits of the creature; but his curiosity being somewhat damped by the extreme dirt of the little figure, he inquires of the parent when it is washed. "Washed!" shrieks the horrified mother, "washed! what, wash a child? You would kill it." Discouraged alike from personal investigation of the subject, and from inquiry, he turns to the elder children. When freed from its bandages, the child's education begins at once, and is wholly of a practical character. He — or she, for it is the same with both sexes — makes his first struggles in life, by floundering in the sand or mud in front of the house, clad in a coarse ragged shirt and nothing else. Being taught by stern ex-

perience to shun, if possible, the Charybdis of mud, he falls upon Scylla in the shape of a lean long-legged pig, which is always prowling about on the chance of something to eat. Looking upon an occasional tumble as one of the natural evils of life, and therefore bearing no malice against his heavy and sometimes inconvenient companion, he begins to imitate the pertinacious diligence with which that animal takes everything into its mouth, rejecting only what is absolutely impossible. Having so far finished his education as to distinguish between the evil and the good, in matters of the palate at least, he is promoted to the privilege of the family meals of black bread and "stchi" or cabbage soup, and to the dignity of an old sheepskin. Behold him then in one of these long leathern envelopes: the inside fur, or so much of it as is left, the habitation of many other living beings beside himself; the sleeves, although crossed as far as the little arms inside can cross them, reaching almost to the ground on either side; the huge tattered boots, each big enough for both his feet, getting perpetually involved in the skirt which trails in every direction. And so he lives; until at last, having attained the size when he can do something,

his education is finished, and he begins life as a man.

After leaving Borsk there is an extensive view of the valley of the Samara from the hills on the right bank of the river. The wind soon dries the high steppe, and gives us a better road than we have yet met with since Orenburg; but as the evening draws on, rain falls and spoils it all.

One of the few exceptions to the excellence of the yamstchiks occurred between Alexievsk and Bobrovk, the second station before Samara. In changing horses at the former village, the usual discussion about the number of horses had taken place; but as it was not yet daybreak I had not interested myself much in it. L. had, however, so far carried his point, that we started with a troika. But as the yamstchik mounted the box, he heard the postmaster whisper to him to drive slowly. The game was therefore not yet played out; in fact, it was only beginning. The clatter of the altercation had died away, and about half an hour's rolling and heaving of the tarantasse through the deep soft mud had rocked me to sleep, when I was suddenly awakened by the discharge of a pistol. I immediately drew out my revolver, and darted up ready for an emer-

gency. But although I heard the word "rasboinik" (or "robber") repeated as I got up, there was neither shouting nor scuffle going on. In short, the only sound I could hear was the low whining of the yamstchik. It turned out that L., tired of expostulating with a sleepy, unwilling man, had discharged his pistol in the hope of waking up the horses, and had at the same time taken the chance of what might be effected by letting it off within three inches of the man's ear. Had the man had a grain of pluck or spirit, all would have gone well; but he was frightened out of his senses, fancied that he was shot, and that he would die the next minute. To every assurance that he was as well as we were, and would in all probability live at least as long; to every explanation that the shot was not aimed at him, and that it would have been impossible to miss such a great hulking fellow at only an arm's length, he was utterly deaf; and to my infinite disgust he turned his horses' heads and made back for Alexievsk. I had but little patience or prudence left, but fortunately retained enough to abstain from taking him by the shoulders and forcing him to go on. When we reached the station, our old enemy the postmaster was routed out of sleep again (it would

be incorrect to say bed in Russia) not in the best of humours, and listened to the story with ominous gravity. The starai, or master of the horses, having a personal interest in the number employed and the amount of work done by them, was the most troublesome of all. At his instigation a formal letter was written to Samara complaining of our conduct. Matters began to look rather grave; for, although we had done nothing that could with justice get us into a scrape, the story might very easily so far prejudice us in the eyes of the authorities as materially to interfere with the freedom of my movements. However, to make a long story short, after many manœuvres, we at last managed to separate the postmaster, starai, and yamstchik, getting one into one room, another into another, and the third into the courtyard. *Divide et impera.* A judicious administration of na vodka, partly in a metallic and partly in a spirituous form, concluded the affair. We were not sorry to reach Samara, and by a second change to leave all traces of the story behind us. We arrived about mid-day on the 30th of September.

The Volga and its hills looked quite like old friends as we caught the first sight of them on ap-

proaching Samara. The town, moreover, had a civilised aspect after the places through which we had passed since leaving Ekaterinburg. Unlike most of the Volga towns, Samara stands on the left bank of the river; but although it loses in picturesqueness by not being built on the other and higher bank, it gains in the view of the hills opposite, and of the gorge through which the river issues above. Its position is on a remarkable bend at the most eastern point of the Volga; and it has been well described as the port of the Orenburg country. The town contains some substantial brick houses, others are in course of construction; the villages in the neighbourhood are large; and the soil is the almost inexhaustible "black earth." The farmers alternate grain and grass crops, having four years of the former to six of the latter; they do not use manure for cultivation, but make it serve for fuel, which is scarce. It is altogether one of the most flourishing places on the Volga. Like all the villages and many of the towns in the neighbourhood, it has a suburb of windmills; indicating that we have entered one of the great corn districts of the empire. The windmills are of all sizes, and possess very different developments of arms, varying from

three to six or even seven, and of various lengths. This, together with the irregularity of their arrangement, gives the whole such an appearance of freedom from restraint, that the traveller wonders how the authorities can tolerate anything of so unconstitutional and revolutionary a character. Beside the mills, there are a great number of granaries, huge wooden buildings arranged in rows and streets, and forming almost a corn quarter to the town. The left bank, as has been before mentioned, is low, and is overflowed to a considerable distance in spring; lateral valleys, then filled with navigable streams but now dry, lead to the river; and at this season, far away from all water, amongst farms and fields, may be seen huge helpless-looking barges lying high and dry. Veritably it is a corn country, but of the queerest description.

From Samara the main post-road passes round by Simbirsk, and thence along the right bank of the Volga, at a greater or less distance, to its mouth. There is, however, also a road on the eastern side, making a considerable detour by Nikolaievsk, and rejoining the river at Balakova above Volgsk. We chose the latter.

Samara is seen from this road for a long distance

after leaving it; and we seemed never to tire of looking at its cluster of white houses. The first station is Voskresensk, a pretty village interspersed with willows and other trees; it has almost an English appearance from the post-station. It belongs to one of the Russian millionaire families, the Novosiltsovs, the possessors of 20,000 serfs. Kammenoi Brod, a village in the neighbourhood, is peopled by the Mordvins, a Finnic race, of whom more will be said in a separate chapter.

After leaving the valley of the Volga, the country is generally an open steppe; but there is a little cultivation scattered over the high ground. It is hilly without any considerable elevation. Wherever there was tillage there were sure to be also cross-tracks, and little surface watercourses in all directions; these, although insignificant enough in themselves, were sufficient to produce a great effect on the motion of the carriage; and in spite of all counterbalancing reasons, we wished ourselves back in the country of the Bashkirs. The fact is, that, regarding the subject as a tourist, cultivation should never be allowed on the steppe, as the hand of man always renders it unfit for travelling.

The amount of cultivation in this district appears to have increased considerably since Baron Haxthausen visited it in 1843. The entire population is of recent date; and has been brought from other parts of the empire, such as Kaluga, Voronezh, Kursk, and Tula. It is said that between 1816 and 1834 the population used to increase three per cent. per annum. Great encouragement has been given to emigration in these parts, and it has no doubt on the whole succeeded; but the mortality among colonists during their first few years, and the variations of climate and crops, are such as to try the patience, both moral and commercial, of a people much more provident than the Russians.

The principal town on this road is Nikolaievsk. The name is found only on the more recent maps, it having been given to the place in honour of the late emperor, by whom it was constituted a gorod, or town. The original name was Metchetnoia. It is the custom of the Russians to change the names of places which come under their dominion; a matter very much to be regretted, partly because all historical association and many interesting links of linguistic tradition are thereby effaced; and partly on account of the endless repetitions of well-

known names. In casting the eye over the Government of Orenburg alone, three Troitzks, beside Archangelsks, Zlatoüsts, &c., are to be found. And as their Asiatic frontier is now approaching countries imperfectly known, but themselves the theatres of primeval migrations, and containing unquestionable remnants of ancient civilisation, the preservation of every old landmark is of the greatest importance. Another minor inconvenience to a traveller arises from the discrepancy between the names given in the maps, and those known to the people of the country.

Nikolaievsk is a miserable-looking place; the station contains very few horses, and scarcely anything can be bought in the few shops. Any people more helpless than the postmaster and shopkeepers I never saw. A gentleman and lady on their way to Orenburg, who arrived about mid-day shortly after us, were obliged to remain till the next morning, and with difficulty procured some black bread and milk. After some trouble we procured an excellent team of greys from a farmer.

The windings of the river Irgiz, which the road skirts, and which falls into the Volga nearly opposite Volgsk, indicate the little fall in the country. In-

numerable little ravines, with steep pitches on either side, and slimy with the late rains, lead to the river. These we had to cross; and as the mud was not tenacious enough to hold the wheels, the yamstchik had always to steer between the Scylla and Charybdis of the centrifugal force if he turned any of the windings too sharply, and of gliding hopelessly off the road if he drove too slowly. It was therefore, perhaps, not without reason, that at Berezovoie, the next station, we were positively refused horses till daybreak. It may be here mentioned, for the information of future travellers, that this, and the night on the road to Ufa, were the only occasions on which we gave in to the darkness or the difficulties of the road. Having made up our minds to remain till morning, we amused ourselves in improving our acquaintance with a dog which we bought of our yamstchik, and which promised to be very useful in guarding our carriage when we went into station-houses. A well trained carriage dog, or even a good terrier, which would give tongue on the approach of any person to the carriage, would be a very useful companion for a posting journey through Russia. But the dog should not be so large as to be an inconvenience

when carried. When we started again at daybreak, the road continued heavy, although the rain kept off, and a fall of one of our leaders with its rider in the deep black slime, seemed to be a matter to which they were quite accustomed. We had had some trouble about horses at various places; but at Karmezka, the last station before Balakova, our difficulties ceased. We reached Balakova at 1.0 P.M., and were glad to see our old friend the Volga once more. If we had not actually returned to civilisation, our route at least lay for some little time to come upon the line which has in some degree guided it during the last century and a half of its progress.

From Balakova there are two roads to Saratov: one, the great post road, on the right bank; the other on the left. As the latter passes close to the Volga, and the former through Volgsk and some hilly country lying back from the river, we crossed at Balakova and followed the main road throughout. We were ferried across in a six-oared boat, the stroke and bow oars sitting side by side, like the old band-boat at Eton. The fellows rowed with pluck, and hit the landing place on the other side very neatly. It was not without regret that we

finally receded from the left bank, with its huge long piles of melons, and picturesque boats, and peasants net-making and plaiting mats, not to be revisited during the present journey.

Lake Silatch and Ural Mountains from the East.

CHAP. VI.

SKETCH OF CERTAIN TRIBES INHABITING EASTERN RUSSIA.

ONE point, which particularly strikes a foreigner on visiting the interior of Russia, is the number of non-Russian tribes still extant in various parts of the country. So much is often said about the immense yet compact territory of the Russian empire, peopled by more than sixty millions of Russians, all of the same race, speaking the same language, and worshipping God according to the same religion and even the same form of it, — that a traveller is not a little surprised to find, not only a great diversity of race and religion in the eastern parts, but that the population of the governments through which he first passes on the way to St. Petersburg is not even Slavonic. If he takes the post road from Warsaw, he will travel for some six hundred versts, or above half the distance,

through the country of the Letts; a race kindred to the Slavonic, it is true, but kindred only in so far as both may be comprised under the general head of Vindic, one of the principal branches of the great Aryan or Indo-Germanic Family. If he should take the route by Königsberg and Riga, he will, after traversing the country of the Letts, enter that of the Esthonians, a race not Indo-Germanic at all, but Finnic. If, thirdly, he should make the sea voyage up the Baltic and the Gulf to Cronstadt, he will find these Letts and Esthonians on the southern shore, and to the north the mainland of the Finns Proper, with its numerous settlements of Swedish origin near the coast.

From Petersburg twenty-two hours will take him to Moscow, and thirty-six or forty more to Nizhni Novgorod, where he again finds the continuity of the Russian population broken. From Nizhni, he may steam for two days down the Volga, throughout the whole of which distance if he does not find the shore lined with Finnish or Tatar villages, it is only because these people prefer the more retired valleys to the banks of the main river. If he continues his voyage, he is perpetually haunted with the reappearance of the same tribes; and near Samara he is

startled by a few Kalmucks, whom he did not expect to see before leaving Tsaritsin. The scattered remains of these tribes are no sooner becoming fewer, than they are followed by the German colonies between Volgsk and Sarepta. If, on leaving Kazan, he takes the Siberian road, a similar complication of nationalities succeeds. And, in short, unless he confines his wanderings to the western side of the Oka and the Don, he cannot be sure of always meeting with a purely Russian population.

At the same time, remarkable as these facts are, their interest is almost exclusively ethnological. For even, although in Russia Proper the districts so inhabited by non-Russian tribes are numerous, they are not large, except in Finland, and the outlying regions to the north and east, where population is thin and scattered, and, generally speaking, nomade. Besides which, the post roads of the empire, the civil and military government towns, the Cossack lines and forts on the frontier, completely hold all the main divisions and arteries of the country, in both a military and a commercial point of view.

The Slavonic population of Russia occupies, roughly speaking, besides the kingdom of Poland,

a parallelogram, the northern side of which would be formed by a straight line joining St. Petersburg and Kazan; the eastern, by the Volga as far as Tsaritsin and the Lower Don; the southern, by the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea; the western, by the western frontier of the empire, exclusive, however, of Lithuania and Esthonia. These limits are, as may be imagined, not strictly adhered to in fact, for there are many small tribes, both Tatar and Finnic, westward of the Volga; while the Russians Proper have long since pushed eastwards on a considerable scale, especially on the Urals, and the main commercial lines of Siberia.

Of the population inhabiting this tract of country there are three main divisions,—the Great Russians, Little Russians, and White Russians,—the respective territories of which may be roughly marked out by the N. W. and S. E. diagonal of the parallelogram, and the part of the N. E. and S. W. diagonal which lies between the S. E. corner and the other diagonal. In the figure so divided, the Great Russians would occupy the north-eastern half; the Little Russians the southern quarter; and the White Russians the western quarter.

The governments peopled by each of these respectively, are given in detail by Max Müller, as follows: Great Russians inhabit Moscow, Petersburg, Novgorod, Vologda, Pskov, Tver, Jaroslav, Kostroma, Vladimir, Nizhni-Novgorod, Smolensk, Kaluga, Tula, Riazan, Penza, Simbirsk, Orel, Kursk, Voroneje, Tambov, Saratov, and the country of the Don Cossacks. A great part of the Governments of Viatka, Perm, and Kazan, and the mining and manufacturing districts of Orenburg, are also inhabited by Great Russians. The Little Russians inhabit Poltava, Kharkov, Tchernigov, Kiev, Volhynia, Podolia, parts of Ekaterinoslav, Voroneje, Kherson, Taurida, the country of the Cossacks of the Black Sea, and Bessarabia; together with parts of Poland, and Hungary. The White Russians occupy the whole of the Governments of Mohilev and Minsk, and the greatest part of those of Vitepsk and Grodno, and a part of Vilna and Bialystok.

Northward of the parallel of 60° north latitude the population belongs in the main to the Finnic branch. The Finns have been subdivided into four heads, the Tchudic, the Permic, the Bulgaric, and the Ugric. Commencing at the north-west angle,

there are the Laplanders and the Finns Proper, inhabiting the countries called after their names. By adding to these the Esthonians, on the opposite or southern side of the Gulf of Finland, we complete the enumeration of the Tchudic division. Passing eastward from Finland, the line of Finnic tribes is in some degree broken by a tract populated, so far as it can be said to be populated at all, by Great Russians; this strikes northward between Lake Onega and the Northern Dvina as far as the White Sea. An obvious explanation of this is to be found in the commercial intercourse between Archangel and the less inclement parts of the country to the south of latitude 60°. Eastward of this interval is the country of the Permic division of the Finnic branch; comprising the Sirianes, the Permians, and the Votiaks. From the right bank of the Dvina to the Mezen, in a south-easterly or inland direction, we find the Sirianes. The upper districts of the Sirianes are upon the watershed of the White Sea and the Caspian basins; and some of the more southern wanderers encamp on the waters of the Kama and its confluent the Viatka. This locality lies nearly on the meridian of Kazan, and the point

where the Volga changes its easterly for a southerly direction. Here the Finnic tribes reach 5° further southward than they do to the west of this meridian. The Permians inhabit the valley of the Kama nearly as far down as its junction with the Bielava, and the Votiaks the eastern side of that of the Viatka to its confluence with the Kama. Still further east, among the northern Urals, as far as the Tobol and Irtish, is the country of the Voguls; and beyond them, extending up the valley of the Ob to Tomsk, that of the Ostiaks of the Ob. These, with the Hungarians, who are now far removed from their brother tribes, constitute the Ugric branch. Beyond this point eastward, Finnic tribes are not found. The group extending from the Dvina to Tomsk are sometimes designated by the general name of Uralians. It need, perhaps, hardly be added that the country of the Votiaks, Permians, and Voguls, forming parts of the Governments of Viatka, Perm, and Tobolsk, is studded with Russian towns and villages. Turning towards the Volga we meet with many scattered fragments of both Finnic and Tatar tribes. The former consist of the Bulgaric branch, namely the Tcheremiss, the Tchuvash, and the Mordvins. But the Tchuvash have been so much intermixed with

Tatar blood, that they are sometimes reckoned as belonging to that family.

The most northern locality of the Mordvins and the Tcheremiss is the high tract of land almost encircled by the Vetluga, a stream which falls into the Volga at Kosmodemiansk, between Vassil and Tcheboksar. This district lies to the left of the road leading from Kosmodemiansk to Viatka. With few intervals the three tribes in question occupy both banks of the Volga from Nizhni to Kazan. The Tcheremiss are also settled along the stream bearing their name, below Simbirsk. And, lastly, Mordvins are found in the country lying both east and west of Penza.

The term Tatar, as was explained above, although primarily signifying the Mongolian family of tribes, was first extended, during the sway of Gengis Khan and his successors, to the entire assemblage of nations held under their sway. From thence, by a second transition, it passed entirely away from the Mongolian to the other, or non-Mongolian, element of that empire. The tribes to whom the appellation of Tatar has ever since been given, have also been called Turkic, or Turkish, on account of the Turkish being the most prominent among the languages

spoken by them. The term Tatar will be used in the latter sense throughout this chapter.

The Mongolian Empire, which till the latter part of the thirteenth century extended from the Baltic to the Pacific, and in some parts from the Indian Ocean to the Icy Sea, at length broke down under the weight of its own massive proportions. Several independent kingdoms were formed from its ruins, amongst which that of Kaptchak comprised the whole of Southern Russia, reaching eastwards as far as the river Emba. The tribes inhabiting this range of country, although not free from either an admixture of Mongol blood or Mongol immigration, may be considered as representing the western portion of the Tatar element of the ancient empire; and with them we are principally concerned. Its rulers became celebrated as the Khans of the Golden Horde. After an existence of two centuries the kingdom of Kaptchak gave way; but so large was this fragment of the huge empire of Gengis Khan, that it sufficed itself to furnish materials for the three principalities of Kazan, Astrakhan, and the Krimea. Of these the two former did not survive a hundred years, while the latter lingered on through varied fortunes till towards the close of the last century.

The principal members of the Tatar family, towards the eastern side of Russia, are the Tatars of Kazan, the Bashkirs, and the Kirghiz. Of the first of these there are scattered settlements in the Governments of Riazan, Penza, Simbirsk, and Saratov, beside those at Kazan itself, and on the left bank lower down the river. The Bashkirs inhabit the Southern Urals, and, generally speaking, are the native population of the northern part of the Government of Orenburg. The Kirghiz wander over the vast steppes between the Volga and the Irtish, being divided into three main tribes or hordes: the Lesser horde, between the Volga and the Ural; the Inner, between the Ural and the Sara Su; the Greater, from the last mentioned limit to the Irtish. To these should be added the Nogai, a few of whom are found on the left bank of the Upper Akhtuba, and others on the plains of the Kuma and the Kuban, beside their principal abode, the Krimea.

Lastly, the Mongols are represented in this part of the world by the Ölöt or Kalmucks, three tribes of whom encamp on the steppes of the Caspian. To the Tchoshot a district has been assigned on the left bank of the Volga, between the Nogai and the Kirghiz; while the tract on the right, as far as the

Manitch, is nearly equally divided between the Durbed and the Torgod, who border respectively on the country of the Don Cossacks and the sea.

Southward of these are the tribes of the Caucasus, an assemblage of nationalities unparalleled in any other part of the globe, and deserving of a separate and special study.

So far, the geographical distribution of the Slavonic, the Finnic, the Samoiedic, the Tatar, and the Mongolic elements of the population of European Russia.

The great Finnic family, which is now confined to the more northern regions of Russia, once spread as far west as the confines of Germany, and southward to the shores of the Black Sea. It has now long since been driven from its richer pastures, and its more fertile camping ground by the Slavic migration which followed it at a later, although still distant period. Living, as they do, a solitary life, even when among the settlements of their masters and successors, scattered frequently beyond the limits of civilisation among the impenetrable forests of the north, it is impossible to form even an approximate estimate of the variations in amount which the population undergoes. But although

there is little doubt that the mass of the wandering tribes will always, as a general rule, retreat before the advance of a people whose habitations are permanent; yet, with the phenomena of domiciled fragments of tribes once nomade, such as the Tcheremiss, Tchuvash, and Mordvins, west of the Volga, before our eyes, we can hardly predict any prospective extinction of them, at all analogous to that of the North American Indians. Altogether the Russian Government, in many cases severe, here exhibits great leniency and moderation; and so far from extruding its non-Russian subjects, or appropriating their lands, it has secured to them, in these cases at least, their ancient possessions.

Of a race and country so comparatively well known as Finland and the Finns Proper, it is unnecessary to say much in this place; but I cannot refrain from quoting the following passage from Max Müller, as giving a complete summary of what now remains of this ancient race: —

"The Finns, properly so called, or as they call themselves Suomalaïnen, i. e. inhabitants of fens, are settled in the provinces of Finland (formerly belonging to Sweden, but since 1809 annexed to Russia), and in parts of the Governments of Archangel and

Olonetz. Their number is 1,521,515. The Finns are governed by Russia with some moderation; and their country, though apparently more swamp than soil, yields an annual surplus of revenue. The Finns are the most advanced of their whole family, and are, the Magyars excepted, the only Finnic race that can claim a station among the civilised and civilising nations of the world. Their literature and, above all, their popular poetry bears witness to a high intellectual development in times which we may call mythical, and in places more favourable to the glow of poetical feelings than their present abode, the last refuge that Europe could afford them. These songs still live among the poorest, recorded by oral tradition alone, and preserving all the features of a perfect metre and of a more ancient language. A national feeling has lately arisen amongst the Finns, in spite of Russian supremacy; and the labours of Sjögren, Lönnrot, Castrén, and Kellgren, receiving hence a powerful impulse, have produced results truly surprising. From the mouths of the aged an epic poem has been collected equalling the Iliad in length and completeness; nay, if we can forget for a moment all that we in our youth learned to call beautiful, of a beauty essentially similar. A Finn

is not a Greek, and Wainamoinen was not a Homer. But if the poet may take his colours from that nature by which he is surrounded, if he may depict the men with whom he lives, 'Kalewala' possesses merits not dissimilar from the Iliad, and will claim its place as the fifth national epic of the world, side by side with the Ionian songs, with the Mahabharata, the Shah-náméh, and the Nibelunge.

"The present civilisation of Finland, its schools and university (Helsingfors), its literature and government, are rather of Teutonic than of indigenous growth. But traces of the Finnic character are visible amongst the existing race. A tone of sad resignation, broken by fantastic wildness, runs through their literature, and meditativeness has almost become their national character."

The first tribe of this family to be noticed is the Tcheremiss, who inhabit the villages near, but generally a little removed from the Volga. In this they differ from the Russians, who are in the habit of placing themselves on the rivers. The villages are irregularly built, instead of being laid out in the formal manner of the Russians. The people are, perhaps, somewhat shorter than their neighbours, robust and dark; the women are ugly. They are very

uncommunicative, and few of them speak Russian. Their language is said to resemble Finnish; but they have many words of apparently Semitic origin in use. As most of these are more or less of a religious character, their introduction may be explained by the fact of the people having been long subject to the Tatars of Kazan, and by the influence thus exerted upon their customs and language. After the conquest of Kazan they held out to the last against the Russians; and now, altnough subject, they in no way amalgamate with their new masters. Their quiet and inoffensive mode of life, and their simple but effective internal administration, have given their masters but few opportunities of interfering with their arrangements; and it is but justice to add, that the Russian Government has done little to molest them. Every village is under the direction of its Kashtan or Chief, assisted by some subordinates called Asbari. The Kashtan chooses his successor, subject to the approval of the people.

Constrained to adopt a settled instead of a nomade life, — without, however, participating in the advantages of intercourse and trade which usually counterbalance the loss of freedom, — they have retained many remnants of their ancient habits. Thus, a

marriage is effected by the purchase of a wife after the oriental manner; the haymaking and harvest of each village or commune, if it comprises more than a single village, is made by the entire population, male and female, young and old, in common, and at the conclusion the produce is equally divided. And to such an extent is this communal principle carried among the Tcheremiss, that no trade is carried on beyond the commune by individuals; every transaction with strangers is made by the Kashtan on behalf of the community at large. Again, the communal land is never divided by hedges or fences of any kind; it is regarded as one sacred whole, and is called the Keremeth, — a term which is also applied to the ancient places of sacrifice surrounded by sacred groves. The term would seem to be Semitic, identical with the Hebrew, signifying defended by a curse, and the well known Arabic word Harem. All of them, even those who have been baptized, are in the habit of making annual sacrifices under the ancient sacred trees, and performing other rites of a pagan character. Their name for God, is Yuma, which certainly approaches very near to the Finnish Yumala. The word used by them to designate the Evil Spirit is

Sheitan, which is Semitic, and has doubtless been borrowed from their Muhammedan neighbours, the Tatars. The name of one of their principal feasts, the Yuman Bairan, held at the summer solstice, also indicates a Muhammedan origin. The Tcheremiss are said to number 155,000 souls. But no very great confidence can be placed in the accuracy of the returns relating to the non-Russian tribes; since many of them are taxed according to their population, and consequently have a direct interest in representing their numbers as few as possible.

The Tchuvash, as was before mentioned, have been variously reckoned as belonging to the Tatar and to the Finnic families. They are smaller in stature than the Tcheremiss, and are said to have a religion resembling theirs. But as they maintain a reserve quite equal to that of the Tcheremiss, our information is but imperfect. All but about 2000 of them have been baptized; but their conversion seems to have stopped at that point, for they still continue to practise pagan customs. For instance, the first visit paid by a newly married bride is to the sorcerer, to whom she offers a cup of beer, with a piece of money at the bottom. He finally blesses her. Their name for the Deity is Thora;

but from this alone nothing can be concluded, as the word, taken by itself, can be connected as easily with the Hebrew word for the Law, as with the Scandinavian god Thor. But their rite of the sacrifice of a white horse is so peculiar, that it cannot but remind us of the Vaidic Aswamedha, or horse sacrifice, of the Brahmans of India. Their population is said to be about 183,000.

The Mordvins have in the main the same religious system as their cognate tribes the Tcheremiss and the Tchuvash. The Spring is one of their principal feasts, and they have their Keremeths, or places of sacrifice. The principal characteristic which distinguishes this tribe from the rest of the Bulgarians is to be found in the facts that their rites are of a simpler nature than those of the other tribes; and that they have shown much more disposition to accommodate themselves to Russian manners and customs than any others of the Finnic family.

The Sirianes are described as small in stature but well formed, with light hair,—the characteristic of the Finnic family,—and bright eyes. Their honesty and uprightness have become proverbial. Like the Shetlanders, they never use bolts or bars to their houses; and hospitality has always been so

much a part of their nature, that it is said that their language does not contain any word to signify "adieu." They cultivate only sufficient ground for their merest necessity; nor, indeed, is the latitude or climate such as to encourage them to do more; but on the rich pastures watered by the winding streams which flow through their country they feed large herds of cattle. Their principal occupation, however, is the chase.

Although the Ostiaks lie quite on the limit of our present range, we must add a few words about them, as they are in several respects a type of the North Siberian nomades. The Ostiaks are rather short in stature, and not unpleasing in appearance. Their hair is generally dark, but not unfrequently light, or red. They are almost entirely nomade, and find a subsistence in their reindeer herds, or in fishing. Notwithstanding the latitude, there is sufficient warmth in summer to make the deer leave the forests, where they seek shelter from the winds in winter, for the cool breezes on the shores of the Icy Sea. The fishing is carried on during summer on the coast, the greater part of the produce being salted by Russian traders from Berezov and the south, who barter it for bread, spirits, and other

articles of civilised life, on which they thereby gain enormous profits. In the autumn the rivers are fished, and the fish disposed of in a frozen state. But the reindeer afford a surer and more lucrative livelihood. Their milk, skins, and flesh everywhere find a ready consumption or market, and the animals themselves form a standard of currency in the country. Thus the price of a wife varies from 50 to 100 deer among the richer, and from 20 to 25 among the poorer people. Women hold a very low position among the Ostiaks; and indeed girls are considered so unprofitable a part of the family, that the sale of them for marriage is justified on the ground of its being the only chance for the father to recover the expense of his daughter's previous maintenance and bringing up. Polygamy is tolerated, but seldom practised, on account of the expense of keeping more than one wife. In the household the wife is not only called upon to perform all the drudgery, but is regarded as an unclean thing, whose touch requires to be purified by smoke. Her life of toil, moreover, begins at an early age, if the instance mentioned by Castrén be any criterion. That traveller asked an Ostiak how long he

had been married. "I cannot remember the year; but it is long since," was the answer. "Can you not form an idea of how many years it is since you took to yourself a wife?" To this the man replied, "I never took to myself a wife; but when I was six years old, my father bought a little girl, and I have lived with her ever since."

The Ostiaks have a curious and pleasing custom of forming a kind of union among a number of families, not necessarily connected by relationship or marriage, but bound together by common consent in the recognition of a duty to assist one another. Poor as they all often are, they perform many acts of liberality and kindness, not as matters of charity, in the ordinary sense of the word, but as matters of course. Among these unions all disputes are settled by the Chief and Elders, — a patriarchal kind of authority recognised by the Russians in all cases except capital offences. Each union has its hereditary idols, beside those belonging to individuals.

Their religion is a form of Shamanism. Beside a beneficent forest god Meang, an evil water god Kulj, a superhuman bear, and others, they recognise a supreme deity Turm, who dwells in

heaven, speaks in thunder and storm, who is approached by no prayers, but governs the universe by unchangeable laws. They have but few religious ceremonies; their winter is but ill suited for such meetings; and their short summer gives but little time for the feast and holy days of more southern climates. But once a year, in the clear calm summer nights, they may be found gathered together for their uncouth worship and dance, either where a solitary cedar sheds its sanctity over the neighbouring forest, or far out on the desolate tundra where a single stone on a rising ground marks out a spot held sacred by these simple people.

The Bashkirs are a semi-nomade race. During winter they live in fixed habitations, varying in quality from the rudest huts to houses like those of the Russians who have settled in their country. The huts are, perhaps, as remarkable for their smoke and dirt, as the better class of houses are for their cleanliness. The latter are furnished with baths for the performance of Muhammedan ablutions, and the walls are occasionally adorned with pictures of the Minaret of Mirgharab, or the College El-Nassar-Eltchi, built by Catherine II., at Bokhara. In summer they encamp on the open steppe. They

live on mutton cut into small pieces and boiled into a thick soup with meal; their beverage is Koumis, or fermented mare's milk. Some of the Bashkirs are permanently domiciled, and evince their civilised manners by, amongst other things, eating bread and beef.

Of their early history little is known. Yakut, the author of an Arabic Dictionary, thus speaks of the country*:—"Bashgourd is a region situated between Constantinople and Bulgaria. Ahmed ben Foszlan ben el-Abbas ben Rashid ben Hammad was sent by the Khalif Muktedir-Billah to the king of the Slaves (that is to say, the Bulgarians of the Volga), who had embraced El Islam with all his people, in order both to take presents to him, and to instruct him in the Mussulman faith. He set out from Bagdad in the month Zefer, in the year 309, and on his return he gave an account of all that he had seen. 'We passed,' he says, 'through the country of a Turkish nation, calling themselves Bashgourd. We were obliged to take all possible precautions, for they are the most perverse and at

* The translation of the passage is given by Frœhn in the "Mémoires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de Saint Petersbourg," tome viii.

the same time the most daring and bloodthirsty of all the Turks. If any of them attacks an enemy, he cuts off his head, and carries it off, leaving the body behind. They shave their beards, and eat the insects which they find among the folds of their dress.'

"There are some among them who believe in the existence of twelve deities, namely those of winter, summer, rain, wind, trees, men and animals, water, night, day, death, life, and the earth; but they also believe that a deity superior to all these others dwells in the heavens. This deity holds council with the others, and collects their opinions on the subjects of which they take cognisance."

Such is the account given by Ibn Foszlan. Yakut adds the following details: —

"I met in the city of Halcb a great number of men who called themselves Bashgourds, who had a very red complexion and hair, and who had come to study the science of sacred law according to the doctrine of Abu-Hanifa. One of them, whom I questioned respecting his country, made the following answer: 'Our country is situated beyond Constantinople, in the kingdom of a Frankish people called the Hungarians. We, faithful to the Mussulman law, in-

habit nearly thirty villages of this kingdom; and each of these villages equals a city in size. Nevertheless the king of Hungary forbids us to surround them with walls for fear we should withhold our allegiance to him. Placed in the midst of countries inhabited by Christians, we have to the north of us the land of the Slaves; to the south that of the Pope, which is Rome; to the west is situated Andalus (Spain); to the east the country of the Greeks, which is Constantinople and its dependencies. We speak the same language and adopt the same dress as the Franks. We make war together with them, and we take the field against their enemies, provided they are not of the Mussulman faith.' When I asked them how, in the midst of infidels, they had been able to acquire a knowledge of the true faith, he answered that he had heard that seven Muhammedans had formerly come from Bulgaria to his country, and, having established themselves there, they had by soft words persuaded his ancestors to embrace the Mussulman faith. . . . I asked him, also, why they shaved the beard like the Franks; and he told me that only those who had military rank were in the habit of doing this. I inquired, moreover, what might be the distance from Haleb to his coun-

try; and he told me that Constantinople was two months and a half journey from Haleb, and that his own country was the same distance from Constantinople."

The Bashkirs themselves say that they are descended from the Nogai Tatars, formerly inhabiting Bulgaria; and that they voluntarily migrated to the Urals at the end of the twelfth century. After the capture of Kazan, they became subject to the Russians, who built Ufa to protect them against the Kirghiz Kazaks. In their new country they gradually became so strong that from the latter part of the seventeenth till nearly the middle of the eighteenth century they proved a great thorn in the side of their masters. They were, however, reduced to order by the establishment of a number of forts throughout their country; since which time the presence of the Russian miners and manufacturers, and the encouragements offered to a settled life, have exercised a great influence on the Bashkir character.

The last branch of the Tatar family which we shall have occasion to notice is the Kirghiz. The earliest authentic accounts that have come to us are those of the Russians, who found one of the most eastern of their tribes, called the Black Kirghiz or

Buriates, living in the country between the Yenesei and the Ob, when they conquered it in the early part of the seventeenth century (1606–30). From hence they were driven south-west by some neighbouring tribes to the country between the Upper Sir Daria, the Lake Balkash, and the Chinese frontier towards Kashgar, where they still remain. The exact nature of the dissensions which led to this removal are not known; but, as the valley of the Upper Ob is now occupied by the Ostiaks, it is probable that the Russian advance may have caused a pressure from the west, and that the conquerors may have favoured the Finnic in preference to the Tatar cause, with a view to conciliating as much as possible the tribes in their rear. Previous to these events, another tribe of the same branch, the Kirghiz Kazaks, or the Kazaks, as they call themselves,—known also under the name of the Western Kirghiz,—were living on the steppes in the neighbourhood of the Caspian Sea. The migration of the Buriates gave them an opening to extending themselves over the steppes of Tatary to the now semi-depopulated tract between the river Irtish and the Balkash Lake as far eastward as Lake Alakul and the Altai Mountains. The country so occupied by these Western

Kirghiz, or Kazaks, has been continuously held by them, notwithstanding the continual warfare during the last century with their northern neighbours the Bashkirs, and still later with Kokand and Bokhara, and in spite of the severe chastisements that they have sometimes received at the hands of the Chinese, on whose western frontier they border. Its limits are defined with tolerable accuracy by the following geographical features. On the east by a line drawn nearly N. N. E. and S. S. W. through Lake Alakul by the head waters of the Ilia to those of the Irtish; on the north by the Irtish as far as Omsk, thence by a line drawn westward along the military frontier through Petropavlovsk to Sverenogolovsk, thence by another line S. W. to Orsk; on the north-west and west by the river Ural and the Caspian as far as the Emba or the Ust Urt plateau to the Aral Sea; and southward by the Sir Daria, the Tschui, and the Ilia. The last two rivers rise in the Thian-shan Mountains, and flow by a westerly course into the lakes Kaban Kulak and Balkash respectively.

These Kirghiz have always been divided into three Hordes; the Greater Horde, extending from the east as far as the head waters of the Sara Su; the Middle Horde thence as far as the meridian of Orsk; and

the Lesser Horde, to the western extremity of their country. Of this division no explanation has ever been given; but it is not improbable that it may have originated as early as the dismemberment of the old Mongol Tatar empire of which they formed a part, and have been perpetuated by the petty jealousies of barbarous tribes, and the almost insuperable difficulties in effecting a union among them when once divided.

Besides the Kirghiz tribes above mentioned, there is one, known as the Inner Horde, settled on the left bank of the Volga, below Tsaritsin; these are a draft from the Lesser Horde, brought here in 1805 by the Russian Government, who induced as many as 10,000 families to remove from beyond the Ural river to the steppes left uninhabited by the migration of the Kalmucks in 1771.

The Kirghiz have the appearance of a hardy and robust race; many whom I saw were strongly built, with large limbs; and all had massive features, a hard countenance, and penetrating eye. And as they came up from the steppe, both at Orenburg and at Astrakhan, clad from head to foot in their thick sheepskin travelling dress, on their little hardy steeds, or magnificent Asiatic camels,

they struck me as the wildest, most independent-looking fellows I had ever seen. The accounts of their predatory habits in former days which are still remembered at Orenburg, as well as those given by Abbott on his journey from Khiva to the Caspian, and by other travellers, fully confirm the idea of their savage habits. Pallas, on the other hand, mentions, as a disproof of their cruelty, that they prefer making prisoners of their enemies to putting them to death; but as he admits that the prisoners are reduced to slavery, the correctness of his conclusion may be doubted. Although avaricious and easily excited to acts of barbarity, in their more peaceable moments they are of a pensive and almost melancholy temperament; late into the night the men may be seen sitting, not, like the Arabs, telling long stories over their camp-fires, but silent and alone, listening to the murmur of a running stream, or gazing in dreamy thought at the moon. The young girls will sing, how their "skin is whiter than the snow, and their cheeks redder than the blood of the sheep which is killed upon it; their hair darker than the branches of the tree on the mountain side, blackened by the fire of a former encampment; and their eyebrows

more black and delicate than the strokes of the Mullah's pen in the tent of the Sultan." And a lover will recount how his lady is "the only child of her father: by day she stays with him; by night she walks with the moon alone for her compánion." Yet, poetical as these allusions unquestionably are, it must be added that some of the descriptions are so literally true, that they lose much of their poetry in the eyes of any European who is inquisitive enough to test their accuracy. But lest it should be thought that a person fresh from the west is not an impartial judge of oriental beauty, hear Abbott:—

"The women at a short distance resemble peonies [in other passages he compares their cheeks to beetroot, and raw beef]; their faces are furiously red; their features extremely coarse. They have the figures of bears, and the dress of toadstools torn by the gale."

Et ex uno disce omnes.

In religion they are bigoted, if not strict, Muhammedans; but, like some of the outlying Arabs of the African desert, they not only avail themselves of every dispensation respecting forms and ablutions allowed by the Prophet, but they

neglect prayer, and are grossly ignorant on many of the weightiest matters of the Law. Sorcerers and soothsayers, who draw auguries from the blood and entrails of horses and other animals slain in sacrifice, are popular among them. But on the whole, religion is at a very low ebb in the Kirghiz mind; lower than among the miserable tribes who wander over the tundras towards the Icy Sea.

The whole of the Kirghiz, excepting the Buriates, are subject to Russia.

With this we must close our rapid and imperfect sketch of the tribes still inhabiting the eastern side of Russia, referring the reader who desires more detailed information to works especially devoted to the subject.

CHAP. VII.

BALAKOVA.—VOLGSK.—SARATOV.—THE GERMAN COLONIES.—VALLEY OF THE ILOVA. — KAMYSTCHIN. — NIGHT TRAVELLING ON THE STEPPE.— DUBOVKA.— TSARI.SIN.— CAUCASIAN CHIEFS.—TCHERKESS FAMILY. — SAREPTA. — TCHERNOI IAR. — MIRAGE. — IENOTAEVSK. —SANDY DESERT.—FIRST SIGHT OF ASTRAKHAN.

It must be admitted that the views on the Volga present much sameness; but they are all so pretty, and the river sweeps so majestically round the wooded hills and headlands, which jut out like the North Devon coast in miniature, that the eye never wearies in looking at them. Upstream the view was something like that at Samara; downstream it was more open; and at the end of a fine reach, Archangelsk was visible in the distance. The road on leaving Balakova keeps to the low ground, which here extends to some little distance back from the river, and is covered with a thick growth of oak scrub. Through this the road winds, gradually leading up valleys gorgeous with the same brown golden wood to a high ridge, whence we descend

suddenly by a pitch of puzzling steepness to Volgsk. It was growing dusk, and the town lights began to sparkle out among the obscure outlines of the houses; the few stars visible among the clouds showed a broad sheet of water below, across which the fishing boats with their lanterns flitted to and fro like will-o'-the-wisps. The post station was the neatest and best that we had seen 'off the chaussée, and the master and his wife the most obliging. If I believed in presentiments, I should think that this must have had some mysterious connection with our hospitable reception at Astrakhan; for, although I did not know it at the time, the greater part of this town belongs to Mr. Saposhnikoff. But, apart from all mystery, there can be little doubt that his liberality and good influence has had its share in making the place pleasant even to a passing traveller. He has done much for the locality; and, amongst other things, we learnt that the church lately finished was built at his expense.

It is so little customary, excepting on the chaussées, to use carriage lamps, that the yamstchiks are more puzzled by the glare of them than by the darkness. But after leaving Volgsk, there being no moon, and the weather being cloudy, it became so

dark, that our man was glad to avail himself of a little hand lantern which we carried. He occasionally dismounted, and, lantern in hand, led his team over the rickety bridges, or round the more difficult corners of the road. He was a spirited sort of fellow, and managed to keep up a trot during the greater part of the distance, so that we got over the stage very well. Fortunately no rain fell, although a thunderstorm was going on ahead. At the next station, Kliugi, the postmaster was a little unwilling to give us horses; but we insisted upon proceeding. As the first yamstchik who started with us could not manage well in the dark, we exchanged him for another, better accustomed to it. It may be remarked, by the bye, that by continuing his journey through the dark nights, the traveller often has the best horses and men; and the fact of arriving at a station after a night during which most people would rest, is not without its effect upon postmasters. Soon after daybreak we came upon a carriage containing two men, bound for Astrakhan, who had lost their way on the hills during the darkness, and had been obliged to take their horses out and to halt all night where they were.

The next evening, the 4th of October, we found

ourselves nearly in the same situation. For on the last stage before reaching Saratov the darkness came on more quickly than we expected; and after making one or two sharp and rather questionable turnings on a level piece of ground, our yamstchik quietly informed us that he had lost his way. Our "fanar," or lantern, again did us good service; for although the bridges were full of holes, the road bad, and the yamstchik not much better, it enabled him to regain the road, and to lead his horses on at a foot's pace. The little piece of candle in the lantern did not last long; but when it was gone and things looked at their worst, a glimmer of starlight broke out among the clouds, and helped us till we caught sight of the lights of Saratov. And so, after some two hours' floundering among mud and darkness, we reached the town; and at midnight sat down to an excellent dinner amid the magnificent desolation of a large Russian hotel.

Saratov, like most of the towns on the Lower Volga, was once an outpost, and is now a centre of agriculture and commerce. A century ago, the country on both banks of the river was an uncultivated steppe; and even half that time since the settlers on the eastern side lived in perpetual danger

of the ravages of the Bashkirs and the Kirghiz. The tribes, like the Kalmucks before the great migration in 1771, did not content themselves with plunder and destruction of property; but carried off prisoners whenever they could, to be sold as slaves in Central Asia.

The German colonies, established on the Volga by Catherine II., with a view to increasing the population and encouraging others to settle in the eastern parts of the empire, extend from Saratov to Sarepta, below Tsaritsin. They appear to have been of considerable service in promoting the manufacture of cotton and iron, in erecting mills for the corn which is produced in the neighbourhood and passes thence to the Caspian and the Sea of Azov. It is, however, remarkable to see how little these colonists amalgamate with the Russians. They retain their own language, customs, and habits; and it must be added, that the Russians also retain theirs. Neither the neater habits of the former, nor their ingenuity, nor their thriftiness, seem to have had the slightest effect on the people among whom they dwell. The Germans are spoken of as the Colonists, their villages as the Colonies; and so in fact they are, for they live as strangers

among a strange people, keeping up the memory of their fatherland as the mainspring of their life during a distant sojourn.

The purchase of a large store of provisions and sundry other articles, such as candles, lucifers, paper, string, nails, &c.— for literally nothing is to be had on the road —occupied the morning; but between 12. 0 and 1. 0 P. M., on the 5th of October, we were again under weigh, hoping for no considerable stoppage before reaching Astrákhan. By the bye, speaking of lucifers, it should be known that they are a contraband article in Russia. Not that they are difficult to procure; on the contrary, they haunt the traveller, they obtrude themselves on him, they pursue him to his very room. For as they are not procurable in the shops, they are hawked and vended everywhere by old women, who thus carry on a flourishing trade.

On leaving the town the road turns away from the river, and ascends a steep hill whence we get a good view of the town, with a grand expanse of steppe beyond. As we go well, we think little of a bitter cold wind, or the desolate looking station-houses, until a bad yamstchik from Ust Zalikha tries our patience by not reaching the end of his long

stage till daybreak. The yamstchiks in this country are generally Germans; but, although we felt almost at home in hearing them speak their own language, they were not nearly such good hands at their craft as the Russians. They lacked the pluck and dash, which had often before stood us in such good stead. Added to which, on the morning of the 6th, the rain came on, turning at once an excellent into an execrable road.

Timber is of course easily floated down here from the forest country in the north, and the land carriage of it is perhaps cheaper than anywhere else where there are no railroads; but the villages, even so near the river as the post road, present a very different appearance from those of Viatka and Perm, being built of hewn timber and planks instead of logs. From Ust Griaznukha the country assumes the character of a steppe.

The road, which left the Volga at Saratov, does not rejoin it until Kamystchin. Although it is not at any part of the interval at any considerable distance from that river, it crosses the watershed and enters the basin of the Don in the first stage, and does not recross it until the last. From a point about

fifteen miles south of Ust Zalikha, or nearly half way between Saratov and Kamystchin, it follows the course of the Ilova, a stream which runs parallel to the Volga through two degrees of latitude, and separated from it only by the line of hills which forms the high right bank so often mentioned.

The Ilova is an inconsiderable stream, with a sand-hill some forty feet high, having a road heavy and slimy with mud below for its left bank, and for its right a fog, which seemed to think it imprudent to show more to an inquisitive traveller. I am not aware of any place more dreary, or less worth a journey of 3000 miles, than the few stages to be traversed before reaching Kamystchin. Let any one conceive a traveller wearied with a journey of ten days and nights, broken only by a stretch on a wooden bench at Saratov, arriving on a cold drizzly afternoon in this "Unhappy Valley." The station and a back outhouse, some fifty yards behind, each combining the flimsiness of plank-work with the rough unfinish of a log building, are the only habitations to be seen. Behind them is the river, marked not by its stream of running water, but by a long line of willow shoots springing out of muddy stagnation,

and looking like the most ghastly imitation of vegetable growth of which upholsterer or decorator was ever guilty.

But to all things, there is an end; towards evening we were again cheered with a sight of our old friend the Volga, and Kamystchin, with its pretty outline and pretty position spread along the bank. If the outside of the town in any degree equalled some of the other places we had seen on the Volga, the inside did so to the fullest extent; and we were by no means inclined to think with the postmaster that, as night was coming on, we had better wait till morning. Twenty-five kopecks changed his views entirely, and induced him to select the best yamstchik in the station to take us. Having more or less lost our way during the two previous nights, it was fortunate that neither of us were particularly superstitious; otherwise we might have considered that it would be tempting fate to try a third. As it was, matters turned out as usual, and about 2.0 A.M. I was roused up by the following interesting conversation between L. and the yamstchik.

L. "What are you looking for? Have you dropped your whip?"

Yamstchik (stooping down almost on hands and knees). "No; I am looking for the way."

L. "Well, take the fanar, and strike out straight to the right or the left, and you must come to the ditch which marks the great road."

Yamstchik. "But we are not in the great road."

L. "Then make the best of your way back to the great road, and take care you do not leave it again."

Yamstchik. "I can't do that, for we have left it fifteen versts since, and have come a short cut across the steppe. But there ought to be a watercourse here on the right, and ten minutes further on, a village; then it is only three versts to the station."

And immediately yamstchik and lantern disappear together in the fog. He was an intelligent fellow, and knew what he was about, although it was pitch dark, and the lantern served only to show a thick wall of fog on every side. The watercourse was soon found, and then the village; and our only remaining difficulty was to persuade the horses to go straight up a hill that led to the station, instead of bolting indiscriminately down a little mud precipice to the left.

Having laughed at our troubles over the samovar,

and sorely disturbed the snoring and slumber of two Russians who were spending the night in the great room, we started again about 4.0 A.M. on the 7th. After sticking fast at the end of a few hundred yards, and changing one horse and the driver, we made a good run through mud and fog to Korovainskaia, where the mist lifted up its veil, and the Volga once more smiled upon us. The station stands high; a wooded dell leads down to a town of nearly the same name by the river side, and the steppe beyond is here varied by a line of hills. From the next station, Balyklei, the road runs along a high and perfectly level plateau of inconsiderable breadth, forming the watershed of the tributaries of the Volga and the Don. This tract is so exposed and bleak that the following station, Korovainskaia, is placed at a little distance from the main road, at a point where a slight depression in the ground seemed to offer some shelter from the wind. The high ground continues beyond the next station, Zapadnaia, and terminates towards Dubovka. In approaching the town we cross one or two little valleys, in which pretty villages lie hid, with a pleasant growth of trees along streams

flowing brightly over sands that glitter in the afternoon sun.

The weather had now entirely cleared, and the grey mist of the last few days was exchanged for one of the most glorious sunsets that I had ever seen north of the Atlas. Light, fleecy clouds were spread over the sky, like sea foam on a wave, stained and lit up with colours such as nothing but the sun can give. Over the broad steppes which were visible beyond the Volga, was shed a bright rose tint, fading away into grey towards the distance; and all so imperceptibly that the horizon was no distinct line where the earth and sky met, but a broad band in which the hues of both were gradually lost in one another. The moon was half full, and bright enough to give us a good light for a night gallop over the turf. Telescopic timber carts, drawn out to the length of a full grown pine tree which lay between the wheels, were winding their way down the road, or were stationed for the night while the oxen were loosened from the yoke, and the peasants huddled round their bivouac fires. And, were it not that we missed the interminable tales interrupted only by the "Wallah!" we

might have fancied ourselves once more in the Sahara.

At the next station we had some delay about horses; but as the morning mist rolled off the hills we found ourselves descending upon Tsaritsin. The town stands at the great elbow of the Volga, where it turns, almost at right angles, from a south-westerly to a south-easterly direction. It is well sheltered by hills to the north and west, and is built on both sides of the ravine made by a stream which falls into the main river at the foot of the town. We found the air warmer here than in any part of the neighbouring country, both on our journey outwards and on our return. One of the great fires, to which Russian towns are so much subject, occurred here in August last, and destroyed nearly half the buildings. It is well known as a bad place for meeting with horses; for the station contains but few, and four roads meet here as their centre: viz. that from Saratov, by which we had come; that to Astrakhan, by which we were going; that to Novo Khopersk and Moscow, which we followed on our return; and lastly that to Novo Tcherkask and the Sea of Azov. To make our prospect of horses less hopeful, we found here two Caucasian chiefs on their way home

to Derbend from the coronation at Moscow. They had a huge coach for themselves, and two tarantasses for their retinues; and as these vehicles were drawn by six, five, and four horses respectively, it was fortunate that their patience seemed almost inexhaustible. They had arrived the day before, and had no prospect of leaving until the day after that of our arrival. They were much interested and astonished at the sight of my revolver; and immediately offered me 200 roubles, or about thirty guineas, for it. I however explained that I could not spare it.

L. lost no time in casting about to find horses in the town; and after some difficulty he met with a German, the apothecary and the only medical man in the place. He good-naturedly took some trouble in trying to persuade some peasants to furnish us with the means of continuing our journey; but, probably supposing that the purses of the Caucasians were longer than ours, they would not come to terms. About this time the cholera was raging in Tsaritsin; and as the apothecary had no knowledge of the disease, he was in no little perplexity how to deal with some of his more unfortunate patients. Amongst these was a Circassian, resident in the

outskirts, whose wife was suffering from a serious attack. The man was passionately fond of her, and nearly out of his mind with grief and anxiety; and his entreaties for advice and remedies put the poor apothecary to his wits' end. *Omne ignotum pro mirifico*, and in Tsáritsin an Englishman is an unknown thing. So having put some questions to me about remedies for cholèra, and having ascertained that I had some with me, he asked me to visit the patient; and had all kinds of excuses — good, bad, and indifferent — for not accompanying me. Having negotiated this affair, he thought that the sooner I was packed off out of the place the better; and accordingly ordered a man belonging to himself to furnish us with horses. A pair only could be mustered. Although this was scarcely power enough to take our tarantasse across the steep little ravines between Tsaritsin and Sarepta, we were glad to take our chance, and to leave the Derbend chiefs with their padaroshna for fifteen horses in our rear.

We went first to the house of the Tcherkess, which was situated a little off the road. The poor man hailed me like an old and long-expected friend. His wife lay on a mattrass with a richly embroidered coverlet in the middle of the room. She had been

a beautiful woman, perhaps only two days before, and even now realised some of my best ideas of Circassian beauty. Her long black hair fell loosely on the pillow; her large dark eyes, in losing their brilliancy, still retained all their softness; and her Grecian profile and finely-chiselled features seemed only a little more sharply cut and more marble-like in their hue, from having lost the roundness and colour of health. She was in the last stage of Asiatic cholera, and a far more skilful doctor than myself could have done nothing to prolong her life. Therefore, after an hour spent in fruitless endeavour, I left a few things, with directions for their use, and pursued my journey. She died the next day, without ever recovering more than a partial consciousness; and the husband from that moment gave himself up to intemperance. I learned this on passing through the town again on our return; a sad end to a sad story.

We left Tsaritsin finally about 5.0 P.M.; and after crossing one or two more of these wooded dells and their bright streams, we followed for some distance the low ground between the high right bank and the river itself. Before reaching the first station, we passed through Sarepta. It was now

night; but we saw it in the daytime on our return. Tsaritsin stands at the commencement, Sarepta at the termination, of the bend which changes the direction of the Volga. This town is the last of the German colonies in the direction of Astrakhan, It was founded in 1769 by the Moravians, whose object was the conversion of the Kalmucks. The position was a dangerous one, being eighty miles distant from the nearest Russian town. In 1771 they had a narrow escape of being carried off with the great Kalmuck emigration to China; and had the tribes on the right bank joined those on the left in the movement, it is difficult to see what could have saved them.

The misfortunes of Sarepta have been numerous. It was sacked, together with the surrounding country, by the Cossack Pugatchev in 1773, when the colonists were obliged to fly for safety to Astrakhan. In 1812 a fire occurred in the town; but shortly before they lost many of their goods in the warehouses of Moscow. In 1823 nearly the whole town was burnt. But, heavy as these losses have been, they are not the most serious misfortune which has befallen the colony. The worst has been the decrease in the waters of the Sarpa. This stream, which flows into the Volga below the town, was

once considerable, and sufficient to render the many mills established upon it a very profitable speculation. A permanent deficiency of water caused these mills to be given up in 1800. In spite of all these drawbacks the indomitable colonists manage to keep their little settlement afloat, although its most prosperous days seem to have passed away. They still manage to carry on some manufactures of silk and cotton goods, stockings, and leather, as well as to grow tobacco and indigo. The mustard of Sarepta has a reputation in Russia similar to that which Durham mustard used to have in England; and the Russians eat it in great quantities. It is, however, not so strong as the English. There is a shop for the sale of Sarepta goods at Astrakhan, where clothes of all kinds, and almost all smaller useful and fancy articles, may be bought. The town is thoroughly German; it has not a vestige of the Russian form or fashion about it. The houses are neat, and conveniently, but not rigidly, arranged. There are trees, walks, and gardens, such as we had not seen for many a hundred miles. Although there is no remarkable feature in the place, it is impossible to conceive how striking its appearance is to a traveller among the sameness and monotony of Russia.

The progress of the brethren in their missionary labours was slow; and it was only after fifty years' perseverance that they could reckon even a few families among their converts. And even this success was fatal to their efforts, for it drew upon them the notice of the Russian clergy, and subsequently an edict that no conversion would be permitted except to the faith of the Russian Church.

The first two or three stations after leaving Sarepta, consist of little else than the mere post-houses themselves, standing out on the open steppe. A gale of wind was blowing from the north, when we passed, on the night of the 9th. The morning was calmer, although not less cold; but, in spite of the remonstrances of L., I could not refrain from having the carriage opened wide enough to enjoy one of the most magnificent sunrises that can well be imagined. It was a real sunrise; for we were at some little distance from the Volga, and on every side there was a true horizon, even and well defined as at sea. We breakfasted on the 10th at Viazovka. Staritzkaia, the next station, is a curious village, spread along the bottom of a sheltered valley. The houses are thatched, and the thatch is bound down with laths. On our way down, I was delighted

with the appearance of the place, and find the following entry in my notes: "In front of every house is a little garden fenced in with wattled work, and containing three trees. This gives a very agreeable impression." But alas! on my return the pleasant fancy of "a little garden fenced in with wattled work," proved to be nothing else than a space prepared to be filled up with earth and dung to keep the cold out of the houses for the winter. The little gardens had changed into great heaps of a questionable sort of stuff, heaped up, sloping from the wattled work, as high against the houses as possible.

The appearance of Tchernoi Iar, the station next after Staritskaia, with its governor's house, barracks, little fortifications, &c., looks as appropriate as a military stock would at a tiger hunt, or a ball-room costume in a gun punt among the Lymington oozes. But a short stroll out of the town, down a rough pathway worn in the sandy cliff overhanging the river, soon put all this out of sight. The heavy corn barges and fishing boats, a few rude huts or a Kalmuck kibitka, and a dense mass of wild fowl in a creek almost within gun-shot, were all that met the eye. The hours would soon have slipped

away, sketching the outlandish-looking figures in all directions, the quiet-looking bays and headlands of the Volga, the islands, and the soft willow woods that fringed the Kirghiz pasture lands beyond, — or stalking after the wild swans, — or lazily watching the slow movements of men, boats, and river, till an oriental indifference about time and the world had crept over my nature, — had I not been recalled by the cheery voice of L. and the words most welcome to a Russian traveller, "Loshadye gatov!"—"The horses are ready!"

A traveller, in his wanderings, learns many lessons of toleration and forbearance; and not the least so by ascertaining how easily he may, by even a very pardonable forgetfulness, shock the principles and prejudices of the people among whom he finds himself. An instance of this occurred at Tchernoi Iar. The country through which we had passed was already dry and sandy, although not nearly so much so as that before us, and our dog missed the streams and stagnant pools which he had found everywhere before reaching Tsaritsin. Just before starting, L. asked for some water for him; and a Kalmuck stable lad brought it in a bowl which was probably his own, and his only eating and drinking

vessel. But he no sooner saw the use to which it was to be put, than he rushed forward, and, forgetful of all his previous good nature, seized the bowl, and saved it from being defiled by the mouth of the unclean beast. Good Christian L., forgetful that we had entered a pagan land, was left standing in astonishment and perplexity. Turko, moreover, failed to appreciate the joke.

Mirage is often seen on these steppes. One day it was visible from early morning till 3.0 P.M.; and the transformation from the spectral appearance to the reality of some of the villages, was frequently very amusing. Tchernoi Iar itself was a good instance of this. The ground rose slightly, but very gradually, in front of us, and the road was visible, winding across the steppe; and the verst posts, and the poles to mark the way in the snow, were drawn up like an interminable procession along it. On the high ground was, as usual, a very real-looking, but impossible lake, along the shore of which might be seen stretched out a very capital of Fairy-land. Churches, palaces, gardens, and groves, with tall and gracefully bending trees, — nay, even some of the fantastic towers and minarets of the higher buildings, — seemed to have the

magic power of changing their forms, and like a kaleidoscope, producing new and varied combinations of outline. Alas! for the change; the palaces were but barns, the temples granaries, and the tall waving trees and magic spires nothing else than the arms of a whole regiment of windmills which were marshalled in the outskirts.

During the forenoon of the 10th of October we passed Ienotaevsk. This place and Tchernoi Iar are the only two towns between Sarepta and Astrakhan. We here found a German baker, who had a little white bread left in his shop; we immediately cleared it out. At many Russian towns a German baker may be met with, and very good bread they make. We generally left very little stock on hand when we passed. It was, in fact, a perpetual source of surprise and amusement, to see the quantities of bread and biscuit that used to vanish from our store in the course of a day or two's journey. There is, in fact, very little to do on so rough a route, especially in bad or very cold weather, except eating; and bread in any shape involves no trouble or preparation, and never counts for a meal.

Ienotaevsk is, I think, without exception, the most desolate and lifeless-looking town I ever saw.

Situated at the commencement of the Peski Sedok Desert, it is like a town half overflowed by a sea of sand from which the population had fled as from an accursed place. The very post-house seemed deserted; and we had much difficulty in finding any one to attend to us. The post-master was out, — a case unparalleled in my experience of Russian posting; and although he was sent for, he never came. The starai did the real business, and furnished us with horses; L. enacted the official, and wrote our padaroshna in the book; while a motley group of Kalmucks and Russian inhabitants, each looking more wild and uncouth than the other, stood by, staring with looks of stupid curiosity unrivalled by anything we had seen before.

We reached Zamianovskaia, the third station from Ienotaevsk, about 2.0 A. M., and were there detained for several hours for horses. It was a queer, savage-looking place; and it rather gained in appearance, from the moonlight by which it was seen. There is nothing but quite a small village, with the post-house within gun-shot of the river; and, like every other place since Ienotaevsk, it is half buried in sand. The station contained two rooms beside the master's bureau: in one was a merchant from

the Caucasus, sleeping on his luggage; in the other a group of yamstchiks, munching water-melon like monkeys by the light of a torch suspended from the roof. The in-doors amusement being therefore soon exhausted, I tried a stroll down to the river; but after floundering through the deep loose sand, and stumbling over pitfalls and mounds in the cloudy moonlight, I finally took refuge from a searching wind in the penetralia of our old tarantasse.

At 7.0 A. M., after many expostulations and appeals, we were again in motion, wading slowly and painfully through the deep, moving sand.

At times the sand cliff which overhangs the river leaves at its foot a ledge slightly elevated above the water, just broad enough for the passage of two carriages. This from its dampness, and the consequently comparative firmness of the sand, is eagerly occupied as a road; although it is often so shelving that we were obliged to walk by the side of the carriage, supporting it with our hands as well as we could. Sometimes this ledge narrows so much as to allow only room for one carriage; and frequently, after a windy day, the dry sand drifts over the cliff so as entirely to block up the road. This was the case when we passed. The only

thing which then remains is to plunge straight into the river. The bed is fortunately not deep near the right bank; but it is sufficiently uncertain and uneven to make the prospect of an upset at least possible.

For a day and a night we had toiled through this waste, with a cold wind driving rain and sand alternately through every chink and crevice of our tarantasse, when suddenly the clouds broke; and before us, above the waters, rose the white towers of Astrakhan.

CHAP. VIII.

THE MOUTHS OF THE VOLGA. — WESTERN SHORE OF THE CASPIAN. — APPROACH TO ASTRAKHAN. — THE FERRY. — STREETS. — HOSPITALITY OF MR. SAPOSHNIKOFF. — MONASTERY OF THE SAVIOUR. — VARIETY OF NATIONS. — THE KREMLIN AND CATHEDRAL. — ARMENIAN CHURCH. — MIRACULOUS PICTURE. — INDIAN BAZAAR. — BRAHMAN VESPERS.

THE city of Astrakhan stands on the left bank of the main stream of the Volga, upon one of the multitudinous islands formed by the bye streams and embranchments constituting the immense delta of that river. Through the last three hundred and fifty versts of its course the Volga is divided into a network of channels, extending over a breadth of thirty versts. The main river, or the Volga itself, almost universally occupies the extreme right, or south-western position; the stream to the extreme left, or north-west, is known by the separate name of the Akhtuba. It may be remarked that this relative position is maintained by the two streams till they fall into the sea: after flowing in parallel lines for nearly three hundred versts, they diverge so as to mark out the delta, the Volga flowing in a

direction nearly due south from Astrakhan, the Akhtuba nearly due east from a point about five-and-twenty versts above Krasnoi Iar. The base of the delta is one hundred and fifty versts in length, and the altitude sixty; so that its area is not less than two thousand square miles. And if every channel between the islands be taken into account, the number of mouths given on the best Russian maps amounts to nearly fifty. On both sides of the river immense steppes stretch out for hundreds of versts; on the south to the foot of the Caucasus, on the east far even beyond the Ural river into Central Asia. These steppes are in many parts sandy wastes, in others salt plains, studded occasionally with lakes about which no vegetation is seen; a white sheet of brine takes the place of verdure, and the mirage alone overshadows them with trees. Exceptions there are; and here and there a stream of sweet water, such as the Uzene on the Kirghiz and the Sarpa on the Kalmuck steppe, the resort of the nomade tribes and their flocks when the minor rivulets are dried by the summer heats. The shore of the Caspian, on this north-western side at least, is low and shelving.

Between Huiduk and Guriev it is fringed with

an almost innumerable assemblage of small islands, the loose sands of which are perpetually shifting under the action of winds and storms. And although these islands do not extend much to the south of the virtual mouth of the Kuma, the main character of the shore is maintained as far as the first eastern spurs of the Caucasus which approach the sea near Tarku. The sand, the salt, and the fossils found on the adjacent steppes, as well as those on the other side of the sea, are explained by the supposition of a great Aralo-Caspian sea in pre-historical ages. An explanation also of the remarkable elevation of the right bank of the Volga above the left between Nizhni and Sarepta, has also been found in the same supposition, by placing the western shore of this sea on the high bank or cliff in question. But these speculations are beside our present purpose.

The appearance of the city, as it is approached by the post-road, is beautiful. It is first seen between two high headlands which open out behind a long sweep of the Volga; a village with its church stands on the high ground to the right, which hides the city again as we advance. Descending the hill on the other side, we find ourselves among some clusters of habitations belonging to half-domiciled Kalmucks. The

men and women, dressed in quaint, bright-coloured costume, and with a most Mongolian cast of features, especially about the nose and eyes, are bustling to and fro to the river, fetching water. One more little hill, — in ascending which we try one problem of "unstable equilibrium," and narrowly escape another of "impact" between a solid body and water, — and now our labours and anxieties are nearly at an end, and the goal of our long pilgrimage is all but attained. We have descended to a little plain, not sandy, but alluvial; it is intersected by a stream, and is bordered along the river by a bright green band of fresh, tender grass, such as we had not seen for many a long, weary day. Perhaps at another time we should hardly have noticed it; but it was unusual and unexpected; and, it must be owned, the excitement of the scene was not slight. On this side the river, at a short distance in advance, is a small low village; on the other, above the stately stream whose meanderings of full three thousand miles are now at last nearly finished, rises the fair form of the long-sought Star of the Desert. Such, at least, is the name given to Astrakhan by orientals; and by such may western travellers well honour it.

Beyond the village, and before reaching the ferry,

we pass large open spaces, surrounded by palings, in which is collected all the larger merchandise, and some also of the smaller goods, brought down from the Nizhni fair. In one court are carriages, in another bales of cottons, in a third crockery, in a fourth ironware, and so on. Many of these goods are going to the Caucasus. Those for the southern provinces beyond the mountains will probably go by sea to Baku, and thence up the post-road to Tiflis; but those for the northern side will be packed in that army of carts drawn up as it were in regiments to the right of the road. Orientals of many kinds are busy,—or, at least, as busy as orientals ever are,—packing and arranging, smoking and superintending. The carts will travel down the dreary, sad-coloured, sandy, storm-swept road to Kisliar, and thence across to Mosdok and Vladikavkas; or, if it pleases the mountaineers and the chances of war, to Derbend and Baku. In one place is a group of carts ready packed, the horses unharnessed, and the drivers eating melons, waiting till the day or hour of their departure, and utterly indifferent when they are to go, or what may be their destination,—the Caucasus or the Urals, or the Black or the Baltic Sea. Next to them are some Persians, with their tall black

lambskin caps and long robes, superintending, with calm and dignified composure, the almost interminable failures of half a dozen Kalmucks in hoisting a few bales into a cart, and the haphazard success with which things at last tumble into their place. On the other side of the road a cart is drawn up close to the river, and a little boat is moored alongside, and a lively Russian woman is scolding and ordering about a couple of semi-animate orientals of no one assignable tribe. She is only going to some neighbouring village, and has a basket of eggs, a small crate of crockery, and a few light packages made of birch bark; but the united efforts of the two men are required to hoist each and every single article into the cart. But the good woman's troubles do not end here: the crockery will come thumping down on the bark boxes, even when by a frantic effort she has saved her eggs from a similar fate. What may have been the end I cannot say, for at this stage of proceedings a cloud of dust hid her from our view. At no great distance is a Cossack picket; at the door of the small rough hut two or three men are lounging, while their horses stand motionless outside, protected only by the overhanging thatch from the wind or rain. Further on is a

party of Kalmucks starting homewards to their encampment; and in another direction some Kirghiz, distinguishable by their heavy sheepskin coats, and hoods pointed towards the back and falling loosely over their shoulders. They are driving a small troop of horses and colts — unpromising enough in appearance, but tough and hardy as their owners — back again to the steppe. They had brought up a much larger number a few days ago, and have sold the rest.

It was a strange phantasmagoria of nationalities and customs, passing before our eyes among as strange a panorama of natural scenery. We were for the moment almost bewildered, and could scarcely realise the fact, although at the same time we could not for a moment divest ourselves of the idea, that we were in the land of the Kalmucks and Kirghiz, the steppes of the Caspian; and that the only roads were, one by which we had arrived, leading homewards it is true, but little short of 2000 miles before it brought us to the frontier; the other along the sea-shore to a region unparalleled in beauty, scarcely surpassed in grandeur, almost untrodden by travellers,— a region about which so many reminiscences and interests, both

historical and political, have ever clustered; where traces of old language and dialect that have elsewhere long since died out may still be found; where fragments of old manners, customs, and religions still linger, like the last wreaths of the morning mist which hang entwined about the peaks of this their mountain home.

We were now in full view of Astrakhan. The ground rises gently from the river, across which it is seen, showing off the principal buildings to great advantage, above the low irregular but picturesque erections by the water's side, and the boats and the island near the other side. The outline and general aspect of the town is graceful in the extreme. In the centre is the cathedral, a tall, square, whitewashed block of building, it must be confessed; but so tall, and standing so well on the highest point of ground above the rest of the city, that we forget that it is a mere block: the lines of the doorways, the windows, and the mullions, the arabesque patterns, and the richly clustered but simple ornament, are so well traced, and the semi-circular pictures so quaintly introduced, that there is no monotony of colour, no deadness of surface; while the five green gold-starred domes stamp it

with that peculiar half-oriental character on which the eye seldom fails to rest with pleasure. To the right of this are the other buildings — a church, barracks, &c. — of the Kremlin, and the battlemented wall with which it is surrounded. Further down is the port, admiralty, and dockyard, and a vast number of vessels lying at anchor. To the left, some long lines of barracks and warehouses are surmounted by a cluster of cupolas and spires; the extremity of the town being lost in a thick grove of trees.

It was late in the afternoon when our spirited little Kalmuck boy drew up at the ferry opposite the city. The wind was still very high, and we were told that the carriage could not be brought across till the weather was calmer. Having selected a Kalmuck, perhaps rather for his size and ferocious appearance than for any traces of particular honesty in his countenance, we put our travelling home in his charge, and commenced unlading our property which it contained. I was on the point of stepping into the ordinary ferry-boat when I was hailed by L., who in some unaccountable manner had made friends with an officer of the port. To him he had explained that it would be much more

in accordance with our dignity, and that of Astrakhan, that we should cross in state in his twelve-oared cutter than in the ferry-boat. The officer took the same view; or I should rather say, seeing that we were strangers, he very kindly begged that we would allow him to take us to the other side. We were much indebted to him; for his twelve men made short work of rowing us across the river, which is here upwards of 2000 yards in width, in landing our multifarious collection of goods, and in launching us once more in a couple of droshkies on the sea of sand which under the high wind was flowing through the streets. Behind us followed a mixed crowd at full speed, pressing round and asking a volley of questions whenever we halted. But so accustomed were we to this kind of reception at this stage of our travel, that we considered it no more than the usual noise attendant on arriving at a large town, and requiring no more attention.

After leaving the river, we pass through a long street of considerable size: the buildings are of wood, and consist almost exclusively of blacksmiths', carpenters', wheelwrights', and carriage or cart makers' shops. Here and there a long piece of wooden partition enclosing a garden or yard intervenes: the

panels are of gigantic proportions and are painted green and yellow, picked out with stripes of white or broad bands of red. The centres and corners of the gates are sometimes ornamented with huge carved wooden devices, something between a rose, a sunflower, and the sun itself, painted, likewise, *ad libitum;* but the colours of the whole have fortunately faded, and the sun, and the sand, and the damp have given the whole the general appearance of antiquity which pervades the entire city. The shops are deep, and the entrances often not too large; besides which the street has no public lights, so that a forge, or a fire, or even a taper or a torch, looks bright and picturesque in the dusk which has now drawn on.

As we advance further into the town, we find many houses built of brick, two or three stories high. And the street where we first drew up to inquire for a lodging, was so full of people, carts, droshkies, and timber drays, that, as far as regards crowd and noise, we might have fancied ourselves in the busiest of our manufacturing towns.

Mr. Saposhnikoff, the great caviar fisherman of the Caspian, the principal merchant in Astrakhan, and then mayor of the city, expecting that my

visit would have taken place before his return from the coronation at Moscow, had recommended me to an hotel. It fortunately happened that the steamer, which we met at Samara, had arrived shortly before ourselves and had disgorged its passengers; so that not only the house to which we were recommended but two others whither the landlord took us, were full. Although it was now past sunset, this seemed to justify an application to my friend in person. Although he was dining out, his major domo would insist upon fetching him home; and if one may judge by the hospitable manner in which we were received, the servant judged rightly about what his master would wish to be done. In a few minutes I was his guest, and we were drinking the finest cup of tea I ever tasted. Rooms were allotted to us, servants, and a carriage; and the French *chef* was ordered to call morning and evening to receive instructions about breakfast and dinner.

I remained six days at Astrakhan, during which my host's hospitality was literally unbounded. I had only to mention anything I wished to see, and arrangements were immediately made for seeing it in the best and most convenient manner. A droshky, of which my host seemed to have an

unlimited number, was assigned to me with the coachman who belonged to it. "That man knows the town thoroughly," said M. Saposhnikoff; "make him take you everywhere. Do not hesitate to tire out that horse, and then to ask for another; for I shall have forty others for my own use remaining in the stable." In short, it was obvious that I should best carry out the wishes of my host by following my own inclination in everything. With this comfortable conclusion, to which a rapid train of reasoning brought me during the first evening, I threw off my clothes for the first time for a fortnight, and slept a sleep which physical exertion alone can induce.

The interior of the city presents a particularly pleasing appearance to a traveller visiting it after a lengthened journey through Russia, on account of the variety in the architecture of its buildings. A person walking towards the cathedral, which forms a centre to the city, from my host's house, first issues among some wooden Russian-looking edifices with the boarded palings that inclose the gardens. But the house we have left is not an ordinary one, even as regards its exterior; it has a wooden tower which rises in the centre, with a gallery round it,

whence, on moonlight nights and sunny afternoons, I used often to look at the curious panorama. Following the street, we come to a bridge which crosses one of the Volga channels: to the right we look down towards the main river; in that direction the boats are thickly packed, and the assemblage of stout masts, adapted both for sailing and for towing, make a dense wood. From the left the stream comes down a long bend, up which may be seen a long irregular series of houses of all sizes and descriptions, interspersed with a variety of churches whose gilded spires glitter brightly in the sunshine. Beyond the bridge are some more substantial, but uninteresting-looking, brick and plaster houses. They have shops, for the most part containing articles so useful as to be utterly without amusement for the traveller, — twine, cord, crockery, and a hundred other things. At the corner, however, is one shop a little more interesting than the rest, — an indispensable necessary to a Russian town; it is a church-candle shop, where tapers of all sizes, from Lilliputian to Brobdingnagian, some thin, some thick, and the greater part very tastefully ornamented with gold. Tired of this side of the road we look to the left, and through the

opened gates of a heavy entrance may be seen a great rambling wooden house, with its offices and outhouses, its porches and its outside staircases, its galleries and balustrades, spread all round and almost all over the court-yard. Its construction is probably prodigal of timber and inconvenient to the inmates; but withal it is ample and graceful in its appearance, and, as we do not live there, we give it our entire approval. A little further on, a large unpromising archway of brickwork, surmounted by a kind of caricature of a lichgate porch, seems to provoke rather than invite the curiosity of the traveller. It is the entrance to the Monastery of the Saviour. The old church itself and the modern residence of the monks, stand obliquely to the gateway, and meet in the corner facing it. The latter is a mean building, with a wooden arcade and balcony in front, insignificant in themselves, but having at the same time an oriental cast which insures favour for them in our eyes. The church is, or has been, a massive pile of brickwork, richly ornamented with mouldings, and plastered. Archways here and there pierce the solid mass of wall, sometimes having side doors in the thickness of it; windows peep out at various elevations; and un-

accountable galleries add to the pleasing confusion. But the plaster is peeling off and the brickwork crumbling, and bright but wayward colouring, the offspring of nature not of art, is creeping up the walls. Bearded priests, in purple robes and with long hair falling over their shoulders, glide across the court, having much business, as it would seem, up the little narrow staircase on which I am sitting to sketch. A little further on we light upon another church, perhaps not quite so old, but in much the same style of architecture, and standing well elevated above the street on the other side. Passing the church we find ourselves at the door of the Sarepta Repository. Here we may fancy ourselves back in Germany, were it not that goods of all kinds are crowded together under one roof; neatly dressed shopmen serve out gloves, coats, hats, pens, ink, writing-cases, table-ornaments, and a hundred other articles that are hardly expected so near the Caspian. We are, however, reminded that we are in Russia by a general distribution and interchange of papirosses, or cigarettes, by every one to every one (excepting myself, who do not smoke), when we enter. Not many doors off are the Persian shops, where silks, shawls, carpets, and

pipes are found in an inexhaustible quantity. Long-eyed soft-looking Persians, with difficulty roused from their sofas, which are visible in the back chamber, open the splendid stuffs with an affected admiration of each as they disclose them, and a show of indifference as to whether we purchase or not.

On our way to the cathedral we pass the governor's house which stands at the corner of the grand piazza. It is by no means an unpicturesque building, having tolerably good simple lines and mouldings, balconies, and outside blinds, reminding us agreeably, on a cold and windy day, that it is often hot in this city. As it behoves a stranger in a distant government of Russia to present himself to the governor, we enter; but not feeling quite equal to a general conversation in Russian, we are obliged to defer our visit till another day, for his Excellency speaks nothing but his native language, and the only aide-de-camp who talks French is out. The next time we were more fortunate, were politely received, and had as interesting a conversation as is possible when no information is asked or communicated, no general subjects touched upon, and the remaining nothings strained through the medium

of an interpreter. He, however, gave orders that the arsenal and dockyard should be shown to us, and our passport made out, whenever we wished, to Warsaw direct.

The street, of which one side of the square forms a part, leads thence directly up to the gate of the Kremlin. One part of it is conspicuous for its substantially-built houses, shops, and arcade; this is the property of Mr. Saposhnikoff. The whole street, which is of considerable length, may be considered as the Regent Street of Astrakhan. It is filled by the quaintest mixture of people that I ever saw brought together; surpassing, in this respect, both Gibraltar and Algiers.

There is the stately Persian, and the lively Russian cadet; busy merchants, both European and Asiatic; Tatar nondescripts; German shopkeepers; a ponderous Bukharan, on one side of the street, as it were counterbalancing half a dozen young officers on the other; soldiers of the line in their various costume, some wearing helmets, some sheepskin caps with red and gold striped crowns; Cossacks hurrying about on their nimble horses; with their lances vibrating and their pennons streaming out behind; the insinuating Armenian, and the sly-looking Jew,

both gliding about with a noiseless step. It is the same with language: we ask a question in French, and are answered in German; we appeal to a by-stander in German, and he replies in Russian; we muster up a remark in Russian, and a man at our elbow makes a suggestion in Persian; before he has done, another from behind breaks in upon him in Tatar; a cross fire of Kalmuck and Kirghiz follows. A fearful explosion of snorts, coughs, sighs, and sneezes, — the characteristic marks of the Tcherkess language, — having gone off at our ear, we take flight in despair from this deluge of unintelligible information.

Immediately before entering the Kremlin gate a street leads down the hill to the left, fully as characteristic as any that we have traversed. It is steep and rough: on one side are some rather blank-looking houses; on the other, a bazaar or row of shops, small, untidy, and oriental-looking, with a dilapidated arcade in front. In the direction of this street we look towards the Caspian.

The Kremlin is entered by a gateway close to which is a high campanile tower, taller than the cathedral itself, which stands on the left a little in advance. The cathedral dates from the latter part of the seventeenth century. The staircase and

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masonry below have a massive and imposing appearance. The five cupolas with which it is surmounted are painted green, and ornamented with gold stars. At the top of the staircase a gallery leads entirely round the outside of the building, whence an excellent view of the city and its environs is obtained. Behind the cathedral is the residence of the bishop and clergy. Beyond these buildings, both on the same side and in front, are barracks; on the right a church. The whole is surrounded by a battlemented wall with a raised gallery for musketeers.

We had been advised, amongst other things, to visit the Armenian church; and, having found our way thither according to directions, were on the point of entering, when one or two people standing near the gate indicated that we were going wrong, and pointed to a small chapel on our left. Here we were surprised to find ourselves in the midst of a German congregation: the solemn but natural voice of the minister contrasted strongly with the deep chant of the Russian priests, which we had now been hearing so long throughout the country; and the organ and the hymn-singing sounded (if two such words may be brought together) both strange and homelike.

The Armenian church itself is a large stone building; the interior is rich, and contains a picture which bears the name of Rubens, and of which Astrakhan is proud. There are three doorways; that in the centre, opposite the high altar, is for the women, the others for men. The congregation is large, and the group of long white-robed and veiled figures in the middle has a striking effect. It is desirable not to make the mistake, into which Goebel fell, of entering by the women's door; for an intruder is liable to be roughly handled.

Another of the curiosities of the place is a picture of the Virgin, in a church near Mr. Saposhnikoff's, attributed to the Evangelist St. Luke, and held in the greatest veneration. It would indeed be difficult to doubt its authenticity on any artistic grounds, for it is so obscured by age, incense, and dust, that very little of the features can be seen at all. But whatever may be the traveller's estimate of its merits as a work of art, any doubt he may be inclined to suggest about its sanctity is at once silenced by the intelligence that it has been four times carried off by the wild inhabitants of the steppes, and that four times it has returned to its proper abode of its own power and accord.

The architecture of the interior is uninteresting:

the walls, like those of most Russian churches, are adorned with a great number of pictures of saints, of little artistic value. It contains, however, a beautiful old Indian carpet, some massive silver doors to the screen, and chandeliers, given by the Saposhnikoff family, and a variety of ecclesiastical vestments and furniture, such as crosses, mitres, cups, books, and robes, exhibiting a great diversity of work, from the pure Greek to the Persian and even Indian.

Returning from the cathedral, and turning to the left, after passing the piazza, by a street nearer to it than that by which we came, our attention is arrested by the antique appearance of a building visible through a gateway; this is the Indian bazaar. It occupies a large court. An arcade and upper gallery of old weather-worn wood, blackened by time, and finished with graceful but simple ornament, runs round the four sides. The long line of the high-pitched roof was broken by great gables having open galleries and balustrades, like the lower parts of the building. Through the arches are seen the low doorways and latticed windows of the shops, where the few remaining individuals of a once flourishing body of Hindus still carry on a lingering trade. One of the chambers is fitted up as a pagoda to which two small windows admitted a

feeble light. As regards the ceremony itself I quote from Goebel and Hommaire de Hell: —

"The walls are coarsely painted with strange figures, representing their gods. At the distance of about three feet from the door a low step leads to a space raised in the oriental manner, and spread with carpets. On the right, in a corner, was a diminutive temple, which looked like a small doll's-house. Upon a table covered and hung with silk stood a baldacchino resting upon four columns painted red; under this, and upon some terrace-like elevations, were placed the idols. They were small, and made of copper, tin, and silver; some were adorned with gold and pearls, others were richly dressed; many were of hideous forms, but there were three figures, eight inches high, which looked like children's dolls. To the ceiling of the room, close by the little temple, were attached two bells, which were rung during the ceremonial. In the other parts of the little chamber all kinds of household utensils were lying about, and at the door stood a large sack of meal: the whole pagoda indeed was by no means remarkable for cleanliness. Fixed in the dirty window stood the ever-burning lamp; it was a leaden vessel on a single foot, and filled with tallow. We arrived somewhat too early: several Indians lay sleeping

upon the ground in the corridors; they did not allow themselves to be at all disturbed by our approach. One of them, however, who afterwards took part in the ceremonial, rose when he saw us, came forward and made a long speech, using violent gesticulations, and constantly pointing to the setting sun. He wished to indicate to us that the worship would commence at the moment of sunset. He was a tall, thin man, with a scanty beard, and a dark brown, sallow skin, and had an orange line painted upon his nose."

"The room into which he led us looked to the west, and two of the priests were in the act of arranging the little temple for the ceremony. One of them kept his eyes turned constantly towards the west, watching with religious attention the descent of the sun's disc to the horizon. The Brahmins were dressed in long brown robes, crossed in front by a white scarf, the two ends of which swept the ground. Their bronzed and antiquely moulded visages were surmounted by white muslin turbans with large folds. The leader, who was much less absorbed in his devotions than the rest, was continually smiling upon us, and waving a monstrous Persian fan that had the effect of a smart breeze.

Meanwhile the sun was fast declining; at last its disappearance was announced by the harsh sound of a conch-shell, whereupon one of the priests lighted several tapers and placed them before an image in the chapel. Another began to wash curiously shaped vessels, filled them with water of lustration, and prostrated himself before them with great unction. A large grey stone set in the wall appeared to be the principal object of their adorations. According to the explanation given to us by the chief priest, the soul of a celebrated saint, grown weary of the world and of men, had retired within that mysterious covering; hence the stone is sacred in the eyes of the Hindus, and the mere sight of it, as they declare, is capable of working miracles. After worshipping in silence for some minutes, the chief priest began to burn perfumes; and the room was soon filled with a cloud of smoke, seen through which every object assumed a vaguer and more mysterious form; the pungent aromatic odour, combined with the heat and the strangeness of the scene before our eyes, acted so strongly upon us that we were soon unable to distinguish what was real from what was fantastic. In fact, our semi-ecstatic condition was in remarkable accordance with the moral state of our Brahmans. Their religious enthusiasm

soon ceased to content itself with mere prostrations. Hitherto everything had passed in complete silence; but at a given signal two priests knelt down before the holy stone and recited a prayer, in slow and guttural accents. Another, with his arms crossed on his breast, stood a few steps off from the chapel, and now and then blew upon a shrill whistle. The fourth, armed with a conch-shell, stood upon one of the divans, and added his voice to the sounds which his companions gave out with increasing loudness. Presently their eyes kindled, the muscles of their frames grew tense, the conch vibrated, a bell was rapidly agitated by the leader; and then began so strange a din, a scene so grotesque and wild, that one would really have thought the Brahmans were all possessed. This lasted about ten minutes; and when the concert was ended, the leader took a handful of yellow flowers, like marigolds, dipped them in Ganges water, and presented one to each of us. Then he kneaded a piece of dough in his hands, and gave it a symbolic form; stuck seven small tapers in it; waved it in every direction before the chapel; and then turning towards us, repeated the same ceremony. Lastly, he took a small white shell, which had been lying until then on the sacred

stone, and filled it with sacred water from the Ganges, with which he sprinkled us very devoutly. So ended a scene as difficult to describe well as to forget."

Indian Bazaar, Astrakhan.

CHAP. IX.

MY HOST'S ESTABLISHMENT.—VISIT TO THE FISHERIES.—KALMUCK FAMILY.—HISTORY OF THE KALMUCKS.

ONE of the most agreeable features of my host's house was the unceremonious terms, on which he lived with the various persons in his employment. He received them in his sitting room, chatted and smoked with them, and they with him, with the same ease, as if they were friends, in the ordinary sense of the word. He is himself a man of extraordinary powers; scarcely thirty years of age, and yet for some years past at the head of an enormous business. He speaks Russian, French, German, Italian, English, Persian, and some other oriental language with perfect fluency, and can converse with his fishermen in Kalmuck. He is already the author of several very valuable papers on the history and antiquities of various parts of Russia; and above all, he is a man of that integrity, straightforwardness, and decision, which alone can explain the deference paid to him by everyone in Astrakhan. During the inundations of the spring of 1856, which

were very extensive and threatened the greatest disasters to the place, he may be said literally to have saved the city by some prompt and bold measure of his own device. He has himself established an hospital, dispensary, and schools; and his wife aids him in his good works.

One day, during our stay, was the festival of his patron saint; and as I was sitting at breakfast the courtyard filled with between forty and fifty carriages. These belonged to his friends, who came to offer their congratulations on the anniversary. According to custom, he invited as many as were disengaged to dine with him in the afternoon. We sat down at two o'clock, a party of about thirty. The ladies — of whom, however, there were not many — sat together at one end of the table.

After dinner he took me for a drive to a little fête held outside the town. We went in one of his droshkies, drawn by his favourite troik, and driven by his favourite coachman. The troik consisted of a thorough-bred Russian trotter in the centre, a thorough-bred English horse, and a third, of what breed I do not know. But anything approaching to the speed of the horses, or the boldness and skill of the driver, has probably never been seen since

the Olympian games. Three thousand miles of Russian posting with courier horses over the chaussées, or with the Bashkirs and their wild teams on the steppes, had shown us nothing like this.

The mode of harnessing the troik, or three horses abreast, in Russia is always picturesque, and, when the team is in condition and the harness good, it is quite classical. The centre horse is placed between shafts; an arched yoke passes at a height of nearly two feet above his neck. To this a bell is generally attached, which rings merrily with the step of the horse. The outside horses are attached by traces and splinter-bars; they have no collars, and none have blinkers. The driver has a single pair of reins, one of which is fastened to the off-cheek of the centre and off-horses, the other to the near-cheek of the centre and near horses; so that when he pulls them in, the heads of the outside horses always turn outwards. Russian drivers also appeared to me generally to hold rather a heavy hand on their horses, so that in a troik the heads are generally turned a little outwards. My host's crack troik would not, as may be imagined, stand an instant. As soon as it was driven up to the door, we had to rush in and take our places at once; and if we did

not do this (as it happened the first time), it must be driven off and brought round, to come up again at the moment required. The appearance of this troik was a favourite sight in Astrakhan; and when it was known that it was going out, not a few people collected to see the start. At their full speed, the centre horse always trotting, they have done five versts in ten minutes; that is, at the rate of twenty miles an hour. I was assured that at times we went at very nearly that speed, and there seemed little reason to doubt it.

The fête was unimportant, consisting of little else than some drinking booths; but we were well amused for half an hour in watching the people: soldiers telling stories, and singing, as they advance in their potations, and the common people doing much the same; only in a less extravagant way, in proportion as the civil life in Russia is less honourable than the military.'

Another day was spent at one of Mr. Saposhnikoff's fishing stations about twenty-five or thirty versts below Astrakhan, on one of the smaller channels leading to the Caspian. We started at 9. 0 A.M., and drove to the wharf. Here we found our host's boat moored alongside, and his twelve Kalmuck

rowers, in their holiday costume, awaiting us. They wore red jackets or blouses; loose blue trousers, with large boots as usual pulled over them; black velvet caps, with yellow cloth tops, and black tassels. While a huge stock of provisions is being put on board, we pay a visit to the head man of the wharf, at his comfortable wooden house in the yard. Here, although we have but just breakfasted, we narrowly escape having to swallow either a large tumbler of boiling tea, or a formidable glass of very strong spirits;—such is the universal hospitality. At the shout of "gatov," all bow and cross themselves before the image in the corner of the room for a successful expedition, and march off to the water-side. But although the cook and his apparatus were "gatov," it by no means followed that the Kalmucks were also. In fact, at the last moment, one or two of them had rushed ashore for something which they had forgotten. As every one shouted for them to come back, and one or two more jumped out to fetch them, or meet them, or help them in again, or more probably without any definite reason but only from general excitement, and as there were several women washing on a plank close by, the return of our rowers produced

general confusion; but it must be added, to the credit of the Kalmucks, that, instead of pushing any of the women into the water, they tumbled in themselves. In a few minutes our party, each enveloped in a shube, or large fur cloak, are reclining on a mass of cushions, under an awning, from the framework of which a tiny saint dangles, swinging with the rocking of the boat. Having rowed out into the open river we find a fair wind, which carries us downstream at the rate of fifteen versts an hour. The oars are soon shipped, and pipes, sleep, or interminable stories, take the place of rowing. Away we glide down past the quays, past the curious high-prowed, high-sterned barges that peer out upon us with their painted eyes, past the port and the steamer which is lying at anchor, past the low flat banks; and in a couple of hours we have arrived at the fishing station. Our boat was moored at a flight of steps leading up to a large wooden house where we are to dine. The mansion contained several rooms on a single floor; the kitchen and appurtenances formed a separate building at the back. It was originally built for the reception of the Emperor Alexander I., at a long promised visit to Astrakhan, when he was, amongst many other things, to inspect the fisheries. The visit, however, was

never accomplished; and the people of Astrakhan felt strongly, and I think not without reason, the lengthened period during which their city, once so important and capable of being at almost any time made so again, has been left without any personal notice from the sovereign.

The fisheries of the Lower Volga, and of the Western Caspian, are principally the property of the Crown, and are leased by private persons. Of these Mr. Saposhnikoff is the largest holder. The chief objects of fishery, are the beluga or great sturgeon, the common sturgeon, sevriuga, salmon trout, silurus, carp, and seal. Exclusive of the seal, which is hunted, shot, or caught at all seasons, the fish are taken at three periods of the year. First, from the breaking up of winter till the time of the floods, from March to May; secondly, at the time when the waters subside and the fish return to the sea after spawning, about July; and thirdly, from September to November, when the fish are to be found in the deepest parts of the river.

The station which we visited was of the kind called Utshugi, and was situated on one of the smaller channels. A barrier of stakes was placed across the river; and below it a number of lines, furnished with hooks and bait, were floated by

means of corks. At a certain signal a flotilla of little canoes, each containing either a man or a man and boy, darted out from the bank; and in a minute the men were busy in taking up the lines and securing the fish. Some of those which were caught, were kept in a pool whence they could be taken out at pleasure; others were carried direct to a wooden building at a short distance from the river, where they were cut up, the roe taken out and transformed into caviar by the simple process of washing and tying in bags, the air bladder set aside for isinglass, and the remainder thrown into the salting vat. The salt fish is a considerable article of commerce; but in winter time the finer specimens are packed in ice and sent fresh to Moscow, Petersburg, and other parts of the empire. Cold beluga is certainly the greatest delicacy for breakfast I ever tasted. The caviar of the Caspian — which is called "black," in contradistinction to that of the Euxine and Sea of Azov, or "red" — is held in the greatest esteem; the price of the former varying from 8 roubles to 11 roubles 86 kopecks per pood (or about 36 lbs. English), while the latter fetches only from 80 kopecks to 1 rouble 71 kopecks. Caviar is obtained also from the Baltic, but only to an inconsiderable amount.

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KALMUCK TENT

As a sheep could not be procured at the moment, we presented our Kalmucks with a goat for their dinner. They were skilful in killing, and rapid in skinning and cutting it up. The bystanders looked on with an appearance of wild and almost savage expectation, licking their lips, and showing their teeth like wild beasts. The meat was boiled and cut up into very small pieces, and then eaten.

Before leaving, we visited one of the Kalmuck kibitkas, or felt tents. They are round, with vertical sides to the height of four or five feet from the ground, and thence conical to the top. The vertex is open, and serves the double purpose of chimney and window. A framework of wood supports the whole. When I first entered, the woman of the house was alone within: she exhibited some signs of uneasiness at my appearance; but when I took out my sketch-book and began drawing, her consternation knew no bounds. She got up, rushed about the tent, making signs to me to leave off; and then began crying so bitterly, that I could not do otherwise than relieve her of my presence. Afterwards having found her husband, and exhibited to him a very favourable portrait of one of our crew, I persuaded him to take me back and to use his

endeavours to pacify his wife. We were followed by two or three of our rowers, who evidently prided themselves on their personal appearance. A few kopecks brought the children over to my side; and it was settled by acclamation that the kibitka, and as many people as could be squeezed into it, should be sketched. But the poor woman, although entirely outvoted, was in as great terror as before; and would have rushed out if the crowd at the entrance had left her the possibility of doing so. Escape being hopeless, she tried to compose herself by turning her back upon me and hiding her face in her sheepskin; but the scene was too novel, too interesting to be resisted; so she finally compromised the struggle between fright and curiosity by standing sideways and darting timid and reproachful looks at me during the whole time. With everyone else my popularity was at the highest pitch; one person after another came pushing in, taking turns, as they thought, to be sketched, as if there was some photographic process by which their portraits could be taken at a single glance. The children, also, kept appearing and disappearing, one after another, among the blue trousers and high black boots of the men. The scene ended in the page of my sketch-book being covered with a hastily-drawn boot of one man, a few

lines intended for the trousers of another, and a jacket of a third, while a face which resembled none was obliged to do duty for half a dozen. We had become such friends in the course of the three or four hours spent at the fishing station, that, for the moment at least, we all seemed sorry that we were going away again, perhaps never to return.

It was a beautiful evening when we reascended the stream; but, as the wind held in its own quarter, there was no more sailing. The Kalmucks pulled manfully for some time; till at last, perhaps tired of so continued an effort in one position, they suddenly shipped their oars, and with a jump and a shout half of them plunged into the water, one of the party holding the end of a towing-rope. They had thrown off their boots and turned their trousers half way up the thigh; and in a minute the bare-legged party were clambering up the muddy bank of the river. They were not particular; nor could it have been otherwise if they had been so, for there were shoals and shallows in the channel, and we were not unfrequently obliged to steer out beyond the tether of the rope; and then the men were forced to descend pretty rapidly into the water, sometimes head, sometimes heels uppermost, to the great disfigurement of their dress. Our host kindly

sent down a carriage to meet us on the way back, saving us the last twelve versts of the voyage against wind and stream.

As we were now almost living among Kalmucks, this is perhaps the most suitable place for a few remarks on the history of that tribe.

As the Hindu Kush appears, so far as we have been able to trace back, to have been the centre from which the Arian nations first commenced their migrations, so the Altai and Alatau mountains seem to be the point where the Mongol nucleus is first visible. Again, as with the Tatar nations, so with the Mongol, it is difficult to distinguish any clear historical fact before they were all brought to a kind of focus by the energy and enterprise of Gengis Khan. We hear, indeed, that, anterior to this age, there were two great antagonistic Mongol factions; but it must be confessed that they are but little more intelligible than the discordant elements of primeval chaos. The history of the dismemberment of the great Asiatic Empire in the thirteenth century, is little else than an account of the revival of old feuds and rivalries, with such additional strifes and divisions, as an increasing population and local circumstances are always likely to produce among barbarous tribes. It is therefore unnecessary to

say more, in a short sketch of the Kalmucks, than that at the period in question the Mongols again separated into two parties, the Eastern of which, or Mongols Proper, submitted to the Chinese; and the Western, under the general name of Dœrbæn Œrœt, spread, as four separate nations, over Central Asia. Of these latter, we are at present concerned only with the Ölöts or Kalmucks. According to their own traditions, they anciently lived in the neighbourhood of the Koko Nier, or Blue Lake, in Eastern Thibet, and a little to the south of the great Gobi Desert. At the present day, Ölöts are found nearly in the same longitude (as well as to the westward of it), but from eight to ten degrees further north.

Between the Mongolian occupation of Russia in the thirteenth, and the Russian conquest of part of Mongolia in the seventeenth century, little is known of these Asiatic tribes. But during the interval, the great Ölöt branch had separated into four tribes, the Koshotes, the Derbetes, the Sungars, and the Torghuts. The first of these at an early period, the second and third by the beginning of the seventeenth century, had for the most part been absorbed either by intestine quarrels, or by the growing power of the Chinese. Whether the

story of their country having been originally to the south of the Gobi Steppe be true or not, it is tolerably certain that in their more flourishing times their principal habitation lay to the north of it, and that their chiefs resided on the banks of the Ilia. They had subjugated, amongst others, the Eastern Kirghiz, on the south of whose territory they bordered about the time when the latter experienced the pressure which drove them southward. Worsted by their eastern neighbours, pressed by their northern who were emboldened by their misfortunes to rise against them, the Kalmucks had no alternative but to seek a new country westward; and in 1630 as many as 50,000 families encamped on the steppes of the Volga. It is uncertain to which tribe or tribes the first colonists belonged; but within a short time their numbers were increased by 10,000 families more. For the hundred and forty years during which this restless nation remained in their new country, they were alternately a terror and an aid to their nominal masters. Predatory inroads to the westward, an almost successful attack on Astrakhan, defeats of the Nogai Tatars, and excursions to the very foot of the Caucasus, assistance given to Peter the Great on his Persian expedition, but given with the proud

independence of allies rather than the dutiful readiness of subjects, tended to make them but a doubtful acquisition to the Russian Empire.

In the midst of all this activity, however, they had not altogether lost sight of their old country. Perhaps with an idea, in the mind of the Kalmucks, of the possibility of returning to their old country; perhaps with a hope, on the part of the Chinese Emperor, of bringing them back as his own subjects, or of being recognised as their sovereign even in their present abode, presents were sent to the Celestial Empire, and graciously received. And in the years 1712–15 an embassy from Pekin arrived at Aiuki's, the Khan of the Kalmucks, where the advisability of maintaining their connection with China and concealing it from the Russians was freely discussed.

The intimacy, then a subject of deliberation, was destined, within little more than half a century, to be actually cemented in a closer manner than was at that time imagined. For in 1771 a migration, equalled perhaps in magnitude, boldness of conception and execution, only by that of the Hebrews 3000 years previously, took place. In the month of January of that year no less than 70,000 families

of the Kalmucks suddenly took flight; and, after eight months' hardship, including both war and famine, they placed themselves under the protection of the Celestial Empire. Thus Russia was deprived of above half a million of her subjects, and the steppes between the Volga and the Ural, which for a hundred and forty years had been peopled by these tribes, were left waste and uninhabited.

The graphic description of the whole affair, given by De Quincey, leaves nothing to be added; but it may still be interesting to quote a portion of the account of the arrival of this gigantic caravan, written by Kien Long, the Chinese Emperor: —

"Those who, after having revolted, reflecting uneasily on a crime which they cannot yet be made to expiate, but for which they see full well that they will be punished sooner or later, beg permission to return beneath the yoke of obedience, are men who submit through fear; they are constrained subjects: those who, having the option to undergo the yoke or not, yet come and submit themselves to it voluntarily, and of their own full accord, even when there is no thought of imposing it upon them, are men who have submitted only because such is their pleasure; they are subjects who have freely given

themselves to him whom they have chosen to govern them.

"All those who now compose the nation of the Torgouths, undismayed by the dangers of a long and toilsome journey, filled with the sole desire of procuring for the future a better manner of life and a happier lot, have abandoned the places where they dwelt far beyond our frontier, have traversed with unshakable courage a space of more than ten thousand li, and have ranged themselves, of their own accord, among the number of my subjects. Their submission to me is not a submission inspired by fear, but a voluntary and free submission, if ever such there was."

"The Torgouths are a branch of the Eleuths. Four branches formerly constituted the entire nation of the Tchong Kars. It would be difficult to explain their common origin, respecting which moreover nothing very certain is known. These four branches separated, and each formed a distinct nation. That of the Eleuths, the chief of them all, gradually subdued the others, and continued, until the time of Kang Hi, to exercise over them the pre-eminence it had usurped. Tsé Ouang Raptan then reigned over the Eleuths, and Aiouki over the

Torgouths. These two leaders, at variance with each other, had disputes, of which Aiouki, the weaker of the two, feared he should be the unhappy victim. He conceived the design of withdrawing for ever from beneath the sway of the Eleuths. He took secret measures to secure the flight he meditated, and escaped with all his followers to the lands under the sway of the Russians, who permitted him to settle in the country of Etchil.

"Cheng Tsou Jin Hoang Ty, my grandfather, wishing to be informed of the true reasons that had induced Aiouki thus to expatriate himself, sent him the mandarin Toulichen and some others to assure him of his protection in case he desired to return to the country where he had formerly dwelt. The Russians, to whom Toulichen was ordered to apply for permission to pass through their country, granted it without difficulty; but as they gave him no information as to what he was in quest of, it took him three years and some months to fulfil his commission. It was not until after his return that the desired information respecting Aiouki and his people was at last possessed.

"Ubacha, who is now khan of the Torgouths, is great grandson of Aiouki. The Russians, never

ceasing to require soldiers of him to be incorporated in their troops, having at last taken his own son from him as a hostage, and being besides of a different religion from himself, and making no account of that of the Lamas which the Torgouths profess, Ubacha and his people finally determined to shake off a yoke which was daily becoming more and more insupportable.

"After having secretly deliberated among themselves, they resolved to quit an abode where they had to suffer so much, and come and dwell in the countries subject to China, where the religion of Fo is professed.

"In the beginning of the eleventh moon of last year, they began their march with their women and children and all their baggage, traversed the country of the Hasacks, passed along the shores of Lake Palkaché Nor, and through the adjoining deserts; and towards the close of the sixth moon of this year, after having completed more than 10,000 li in the eight months of their wayfaring, they at last arrived on the frontiers of Chara Pen, not far from the banks of the Ilia."

"The Torgouths arrived; and at once found lodging, food, and all the conveniences they could

have enjoyed each in his own dwelling. Nor was this all; the principal men among them, who were to come in person and pay homage to me, were conducted with honour and free of expense by the imperial post roads to the place where I then was. I saw them, spoke to them, and was pleased that they should enjoy the pleasures of the chase with me; and after the days allotted to that recreation were ended they repaired in my suite to Ge Ho."

At this point the history of the Kalmucks may be said to cease. The administration of the tribes who had not migrated was indeed once transferred again in 1805 by the Emperor Paul to an independent khan; but it remained in his hands only for a short time, and then reverted to a mixed committee of Russians and Kalmucks, which sits in Astrakhan to this day.

The features and general appearance of the Kalmucks hardly need any description. Their long eyes, set obliquely in their head, their scanty black brows, black hair, and huge ears, are well known. They are generally short, and few instances of deformity, or even bad make, are seen among them. We found them sociable, merry, good-natured fellows; and should have liked to make a sojourn among them. Their kibitkas, or round, conical, felt tents, are not

nearly so dirty as might be expected; certainly much less so than those of the Bashkirs. But their kitchen arrangements are hardly so congenial to a European's habits, as it would be considered a disgrace to wash out any of their utensils with water; a wipe with the back of the hand is considered the correct method of cleansing them. They use the brick tea, or coarse kind of leaves made into paste with sheep's blood, and hardened. This they boil in water, adding milk, butter, and salt. They also make a kind of spirit from mare's, or other milk.

Their marriage ceremonies, which are curious, are thus described by Hommaire de Hell: —

"The preliminaries consist in stipulating the amount in horses, camels, and money, which the bridegroom is to pay to the bride's father; this being settled, the young man sets out on horseback, accompanied by the chief nobles of his oulousse, to carry off his bride. A sham resistance is always made by the people of her camp, in spite of which she fails not to be borne away on a richly caparisoned horse, with loud shouts and *feux de joie*. When the party arrive at the spot where the kibitka of the new couple is to stand, and where the trivet supporting their great pot is already placed, the bride and bridegroom

dismount, kneel down on carpets, and receive the benediction of their priests; then they rise, and, turning towards the sun, address their invocations aloud to the four elements. At this moment the horse on which the bride has been brought home is stripped of saddle and bridle; and turned loose for any one to catch and keep who can. The intention of this practice, which is observed only among the rich, is to signify to the bride that she is thenceforth to live only with her husband; and not think of returning to her parents. The setting up of the kibitka concludes the whole ceremony. The bride remains veiled until the tent is ready, and her husband, taking off her veil, hands her into her new home. There is one curious incident in the marriages of the wealthy, which deserves mention. The bride chooses a bridesmaid who accompanies her in her abduction; and when they come to the place for the kibitka, the bride throws her handkerchief among the men; whoever catches it must marry the bridesmaid. For a year after marriage the wife must confine herself to the tent, and during all that time can only receive visits on its threshold, even on the part of her parents. But when the year is out she is free to do just as she likes."

The women enjoy a liberty and independence unknown in Moslem countries, but still not unlimited, as the following extract from one of their favourite fables will show.

At a council of the birds, summoned to deliberate about the marriage of their khan, one member, having arrived late, was called upon for an explanation of his want of punctuality. And having pleaded the length of his journey, he proceeded to say that he had in the course of it observed three things. First, that there are more nights than days; for the clouds and fogs convert intervals, which should rightly be days, into nights. Secondly, that the dead are more numerous than the living; because those who sleep are as dead. And thirdly, that there are more women than men; because husbands who obey their wives are but women.

If the reflective European inquire further how the Kalmuck philosopher explains these anomalies in the physical and moral worlds, he will hold up his open hand, and say, "some fingers are long, and some are short."

CHAP. X.

VISIT TO THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE.

In the "twenty-first double cycle" since the birth of Buddha of blessed memory, "now gone to the blissful and everlasting state of Nirvána," "in the year of the Hare," "the year being in the constellation of longevity, towards the end of the summer rest," in "the month Dog," on "the morrow of the second fast day of the month," a pilgrim from "the Ruby Island of the far West" arrived at "the Island of the Four Mountains and Four Rivers," "where the six-and-thirty virgin spirits repose on the stars of the sacred springs."

Having studied the Four Sublime Verities, the Lotus of the good Law and the Development of the Games, he was neither sunk in invincible ignorance, nor perfect in the law, but was one of the class to whom the divine doctrine is especially offered. For, as saith the great teacher, just as when one seated on the brink of a tank regards the water-lilies growing in it; some he sees deep in the water, some at the

surface, some altogether raised above it; so those who are hopelessly sunk in error I cannot redeem: those who have attained the truth have no need of my teaching: but they who are fluctuating and uncertain will learn the truth if I teach; and if I teach not they will perish.

The pilgrim had come impelled by a desire to be further instructed in the three Repositories of Truth, the Aphorisms of the Founder, Discipline, and Metaphysics, as well as to be present at one of the three great annual festivals, if it had been possible. Bût the Zakan Zara, or Celebration of the return of Spring, and the Urus Zara, or Summer Feast of the Benediction of the Waters, had long passed; while the Sulun Zara, or Feast of the Lamp, would not take place till after two moons.

So between the hours of the midday and the evening prayers, having crossed the Volga from Astrakhan in a boat rowed by ten of the Faithful, he travelled out on the steppe. The broad river first became as a thin silver thread, and then was lost to view; presently also the last pinnacle of the Christian cathedral sank below the horizon, so that a man stooping down and looking along the ground could see no trace of the city even though it had

been the hour of sunrise. Away he sped over the dry brown turf, as it were for the space of an hour of the long days of summer, and came to the borders of a still lake. On the opposite shore was a small Ulusse, or village of tents, with its kurul, or priests' camp, outside. On his arrival the pilgrim was met by a priest in a yellow shirt, with a long red tunic and hood over it. Slowly and reverently he followed his guide, who led the way into the temple, where, for the first time in his life, and after a journey of nearly three moons, he was present at the far-famed worship of the Buddhistic faith.

At the further end stood the altar, on which was a stand with eight niches each containing a burkhan or image of Sakhya Muni himself, or some other subsequent Buddha. In front was a table covered with sacred instruments of various descriptions in silver, and with little vessels holding corn, oil, and salt, the offerings of the Faithful. But as this did not suffice, a side altar was also raised with its table before it, for the offerings which remained over and above after the first had been filled. Tapers also stood upon the table; that as the sun, moon, and stars, give light upon the earth, which is the world of birth, and of life, so should light also be given in

the sanctuary which is the world of liberation from evil, and the vestibule of Nirvána.

On either side of the altars were rich silk banners whereon the mysteries of the creation of the world, the enlightenment of man, and his purification, were portrayed.

They told how out of the great deep the spirits of the air, who exist from all eternity, called forth the world: how from the abyss first rose fiery-coloured clouds, which gathering together, fell in rain-drops below, each large as a chariot wheel in size, and formed the universal sea: how a mighty wind blew upon the surface of the waters, and swept them clear of clouds; and how from the milk-white foam all living creatures issued forth: how the winds traversed the universe, and, meeting again in this upper world, combined to upheave the mystic Mount Meru, that reaches as far upward in the clear blue starlit sky, as downward among the deep sea caves of the dim weed-grown ocean bed: how four faces of the pillar are respectively of silver, sapphire, gold, and ruby, and the sun's rays are reflected from them successively at dawn, in the morning, midday, and in the evening; but what more faces there are, or of what they are made, no man knows, for they are turned away from

the earth, and when the sun is behind the mountain it is night.

Near the banners on the right of the burkhans in their niches, was a stand containing sacred books: namely, that which shows how to preserve the commandments of Buddha, and how to abstain from sins, and also the fraud of the sixty-two other religions; the first book about doctors, by which everything about physic may be known; a dialogue between a Buddhist priest and a Brahman, in which the Brahman is at last converted; the sixteen exhortations in respect of flowers, the seventeen in respect of fools, and the fourteen in respect of wise men; and many others.

Nearest to the altar, and on the right of it, sat the bakshan, or chief priest. The eldest among his equals of all the Kalmucks of the Caspian Steppes is reckoned as the Lama; for since the tiger year of the last cycle, when Ubacha migrated, the Russians have allowed no communication with the real Lama at L'hassa in Thibet. Next to him sat a ghelung, or country parson, with a horn; opposite these, two more ghelungs, one with bells and the other with a horn. Next to them two ghetzuls, or deacons, with drums; and lastly a chorister; and behind the

chief priest two mandshis, or musicians, with copper horns some seven feet in length. The chief priest was dressed in rich brocaded silk, the skirt having a gold-coloured flower pattern on a red ground, the cape a similar pattern on a blue ground, the sleeves of the colour of salmon. He wore a head-dress adorned with paintings of deities, and a pinnacle of balls rising up in the centre. The others wore red robes with yellow tunics and hoods.

Then began the sacred office: in a low tone the chief priest chanted the "Om mani padmi khom." Let none of the uninitiated ask the meaning of these words; for, in order to explain them, whole volumes need to be written; but let it suffice them to know that the first word alone preserves him who pronounces it from peril of death, the last from the pains of hell. Then the whole body of priests chanted them; and after this the drums, the horns, the cymbals, and the bells, gave forth their notes in harmony with the singers. Afterwards were recited prayers which are powerful to still the voice of the thunder and to ward off lightning, to heal all manner of sickness, and to give peace to the spirits of the departed.

Then having inquired, the pilgrim was instructed

in all the learning of the Bhuddists; but his companion, who was sunk in darkness and error, put many ignorant questions to the teacher.

"Who made the world?"

"No one."

"How then do you account for its creation?"

"It was not created at all, but came into existence of itself by natural causes."

"What are your views concerning the first man and woman; for there must have been a first pair from whom all men have descended."

"There was no such thing as a first man and woman; we have all sprung from those who, having previously ended their lives, have transmigrated into this world in the first age."

"How did sin enter into the world?"

"By avarice, covetousness, anger, and the corrupted temper of man."

"Is the devil, or any other powerful spirit, the cause of sin?"

"By no means."

"How is sin punished?"

"By its own consequences."

"Does not the Supreme Being interfere so as

sometimes to arrest a sinner, and sometimes to bring judgment upon him?"

"No. A useless life brings another life after it, that the useless liver may live again more usefully; an impure life, that the impure liver may be purified."

"Do you not then believe that from this life men go to their final destination of reward or punishment?"

"No. You Christians send your souls still impure from the contaminations of life into the presence of the All Pure, and think to have them purified in a moment; whereas nothing in the world, not even a stew-pan, is cleaned but by a gradual process."

"But is there then no final state of punishment or blessedness to which souls may ever attain?"

"Yes; for punishment it is said that there is a place far away among the Salt Sea mists, and reached only after many long and wilful wanderings, from whence there is no return. But none of our sages have ever told us much about it; nor do we dwell much upon it in thought, partly because by even thinking of evil the mind may come to desire

it, and partly because it is better to think of Nirvána."

"What is Nirvána?"

"Nirvána is the state to which the soul may at last attain; it is the deliverance from evil, freedom from all excitement and change. It is derived from the negative particle *nir*, and *vá* to blow as the wind; and thus it means calm and unruffled, or the peace and rest of a breeze which has spent itself and is still."

"But you are worse than the Brahmans, for with them there is the universal spirit, intelligence, and light in which the pure soul is bathed; they at least recognise a God with whom it is ultimately united; you, on the other hand, look forward to a negation and blank as the only salvation, the sole object of aspiration for the mind of man."

"Well, Christian, it may be so. But is it to be wondered at if in a world of trouble, of labour, and of sorrow, — where the path of the discoverer of truth and the promoter of good is beset with thorns, — where ends are attained only by a long struggle of patience and toil, — where the less good objects and means must often be preferred to the better, because they are more possible, — where

generations must elapse before the world can be made better, many births and existences outlived before the individual be perfected, — do you wonder if in this vista of anticipation the Eternal Light which may be shining beyond should be dimmed or obscured by intervening mists, or if the mind should have clearer ideas about the overcoming of difficulties than about the end when they are all overcome?"

"O, Buddhist, I perceive that you are in the gall of bitterness; change your religion for mine, and you will then see the error of your ways."

"O, Christian, no doubt learned in the things pertaining to your own religion; but I also will ask you a question. The nation of the Turks, is it not a great nation?"

"Certainly."

"And worthy of the support of the English?"

"This has been shown in recent events."

"But they profess a strange religion of their own, more recent and less widely spread than the Christian?"

"It cannot be denied."

"Suppose then a Mullah were to come and tell your archbishop to change his religion for the

Moslem, and that he would then find it the better of the two, what should you think of him?"

"We should think that he was mad, or had tasted of the beverage forbidden by his prophet, or that he was a fool."

After this the Kalmuck asked no more questions.

Buddhist High Priest.

CHAP. XI.

LEAVE ASTRAKHAN. — COUNTRY AND PEOPLE OF THE DON COSSACKS. — NOVO KHOPERSK. — TAMBOV. — FERTILITY OF THE LAND. — THE BLACK EARTH. — RIASK. — RIAZAN. — RETURN TO MOSCOW. — THE KING OF BELLS. — ARRIVAL AT WARSAW.

On the 16th of October, at 1.0 P. M., we drove down to the ferry, and, having crossed the river, bade our last farewell to the last of our host's people, who came to see us fairly on board our tarantasse again. It was a beautiful afternoon, and the city looked as well as when we first saw it, and better in proportion as an old face is better than a new one.

βὴ δ' ἀχέων πάρα δῖνα.

At several of the stations we were troubled about horses, a thing which tries the temper of a traveller not a little when he has left his most interesting point, and has his face set homewards. We found the second station from Astrakhan, Lebiazhinskaia, a good exception to the others both in going and returning. The station-master is a capital fellow, and keeps the station, the yamstchiks, and the horses, all

in good order. There was a sharp white frost every morning; it was cold at night, and fine if not warm during the day. We reached Tsaritsin again at 2. 0 P. M. on the 18th. Here we heard the termination of the story of the Tcherkess and his wife, recounted above. At the station, where by the bye it was nearly as warm as when we passed on our outward journey, we had the unusual good fortune to find horses at once. We therefore lost no time in taking our departure. The Moscow road leads up a steep hill from which we looked back with regret at our last sight of the Volga. There it lay winding slowly away, round the great deep below the town; away past the hills on the right, and the willow woods and long sandbanks on the left; away, far away, among the salt and sandy steppes, to the Caspian.

Shortly before reaching Grázevskaia, the second station from Tsaritsin, we enter the country of the Don Cossacks, the dreariest of all our Russian journey. My rough notes are here full of the following entries: "continued undulating steppe;" "similar steppe all the rest of the day;" "we miss the Volga," "and the Kalmucks;" "post-houses very dirty and small." The latter point struck us par-

ticularly after the large and substantial stations in the Government of Astrakhan. Added to this, the people had now already shut up their houses for the winter; after which the peculiar smell described by Mr. Russell becomes a disgusting atmosphere, a smell "that may be felt,"—almost poisonous to a European. For 400 versts, from Tsaritsin to Novo Khopersk, there is not a single town; nothing but a series of the most miserable villages. The country has the misfortune to produce no timber; but it has also the misfortune—at least such it appears to be—to produce underwood, which is consequently employed with the assistance of mud and grass for a substitute. A broad belt of land along the left bank of the Don and the Khoper (the river which flows past Novo Khopersk into the Don) is sandy and desolate; and this is the line taken by the post road.

The Khoper and the Don divide the country of the Don Cossacks into two parts differing widely in character. The eastern division, although not so sandy throughout as the tract along the river mentioned above, is uniformly barren and dreary. It extends southward in the direction of the Caucasus to the Manitch, and partakes both of th

muddy character of the Lower Volga, and of the salt and sand of the Caspian Steppes. It is, however, an excellent district for horse-breeding; and along the Khoper and the Miedveditza (which lies eastward of the former river, and flows nearly parallel to the Ilova and the Volga) are some of the most celebrated studs. The western division is almost as fertile as the eastern is barren; it consists of high plains intersected at most remarkably regular intervals by streams, and enriched with the famous black earth of Central Russia.

Six days and nights from Astrakhan brought us to Novo Khopersk; after which the country is more cultivated, and its general appearance less savage. In fact, in this direction the frontiers of the Governments of Voronezh and Tambov seem to be the limits of civilisation. Sprung from a different race, having different habits and customs and conflicting interests, the Cossacks of the Don were a thorn in the side of Russia from the ruin of the Tatar Empire in the thirteenth century, until the final annihilation of their political existence by the Tsar Paul. Their constitution approached more nearly to a republic of equality than perhaps any other. They recognised no nobility, no permanent difference in

rank. Their ataman, or chief officer, returned to private life at the termination of his five years' period of tenure; the military officer of one campaign served in the ranks in another. But, if honours among them were always temporary, disgrace might sometimes be permanent; the stigma of having entered the service of the Tsar was indelible. On these principles Catherine II. made a direct attack; and though her ukase, conferring permanent rank and privileges on those who had served in her armies, occasioned a serious revolt, the movement was soon crushed. In spite, however, of these changes, the country continued during the last century to be a place of comparative freedom and immunity, and there refugees of all kinds found an asylum. But, on this plea, a double and decisive blow was struck by the Emperor Paul at the hereditary ideas of equality. And two classes of society, hitherto unknown among the Cossacks, were suddenly called into existence: on the one hand, the refugees were declared to be the serfs of the landowners whose protection they had sought; and on the other, upon all employés of the government an unsought nobility was conferred. In order to remove all possibility of danger from a people not

yet reconciled to a new *régime*, the fighting men were employed at nearly all the custom-house and quarantine stations on the west, and along all the frontier lines of the east, from the Caucasus to the Kirghiz Steppes and Siberia, for which they could supply a sufficient force. Every male Cossack has to serve for a period of twenty years abroad, or for twenty-five at home; but this period is extensible, and often extended, according to the requirements of the government.

These, and many other details which might be added, are sufficient to remove any surprise at the very marked peculiarities which a traveller cannot fail to notice on entering or quitting the Don Cossack country.

An immense length of the road, both in the Government of the Don Cossacks and in that of Tambov, is marked out on a gigantic scale by heaps of stones varying from four to six feet high. These are visible from a great distance; and it is very striking to see the double row of them indicating the line of route across the great steppe undulations which often present no other trace of the hand of man. Occasionally the line enters a tract of rough brushwood, which has never yet been cleared;

although the imperial road has been "made" through it for some thirty years past.

It was in descending one of these undulations that we were much amused with the dexterity which our yamstchik exhibited in upsetting obstructive carts. We were going at a great rate; and if the cart-drivers were asleep, as was often the case, they had scarcely time to get out of the way when awakened by the sound of our horse bells and our driver's shout. In such a case his delight was to steer so that one of our shafts just caught the upper part of the cart above the hind wheel. When empty, the cart was in a moment on its side. The thing was so neatly done, that, though we summoned all the gravity at our command, inextinguishable laughter was visible through our expostulations, and materially diminished their effect. We managed to compromise the matter, so that no laden carts should be upset; as for the empty ones, they were as easily righted as overturned.

We reached Tambov about 6.0 A. M. on the 24th of October. The white frosts of the mornings had now gradually changed to black; and, although the winter had not yet set in, the cold weather was evidently drawing on. Slight showers of snow had

fallen in the evenings; and as the road had been getting worse and worse since we left the steppes, and we had been warned that the part between Tambov and Riazan was the worst of all, we were beginning to be anxious to reach the latter place as soon as possible. The interval between the end of autumn and the hardening of the snow, is considered the least favourable for travelling. From Riazan to Moscow, and thence to Warsaw, there is an excellent chaussée.

In spite of the badness of the road we found the posting well organised, the horses good, and the stations, which are mostly new, excellent. It was a bright frosty morning when we entered Tambov and drove up to the stanzia on the market-place. The main street of the town looks extremely like a collection of tea-garden pavilions; the houses are wooden and painted bright colours, and are a little fantastic in shape. The post station is unutterably filthy. One third of the government consists of the black earth; and in good years it has been known to produce one third more grain than it could consume or export. The town has a population of about 10,000.

As the neighbourhood of Tambov presents a very

different aspect about harvest time from that under which I saw it, it will only be doing justice to the place to quote a letter from a friend who visited it at the more favourable season: — "I wish you had travelled through that part of the country, as I did, before harvest, — your readers would have been gainers by it. After lumbering along all night, you can easily imagine the effect produced in my mind, coming from the north, on opening the curtains of the kibitka at sunrise; — on every side one vast 'yellow sea' of ripe corn; fields, apparently interminable, in all directions on the plains, rendered still more striking by the scarcity of timber. And then, when the sun rose a little higher and a light breeze sprung up, you can picture to yourself, being an artist, the glorious lights and shadows as the almost horizontal rays fell upon the waving corn. I halted at the house of a friend a few versts beyond Tambov, and we rode out on little Erivan horses through the fields — always corn. The quantity bewildered me. 'What becomes of it?' I asked. 'Why,' he replied, 'the mice and the weevils consume their share; some is retained for home consumption; as much as possible is converted into vodka; and the rest is sent to neighbouring markets, if we are lucky

enough to be able to obtain a price that will pay for carriage.' A mougik was lying on his back sunning himself, and by his side was his spade, — a wooden implement merely shod with iron. A sudden desire seized me to ascertain what depth of the rich fine soil existed there, and what was below it. I began to dig, but found the exercise rather violent under a Tambov sun, and discovered moreover that the mougik, though he stood cap in hand, looked upon me as a peculiar kind of lunatic patronised by my friend his master. I therefore handed the spade and a grivennik (fourpence) to him, and set him to work; but after digging about four feet it became inconvenient to go lower without enlarging the hole, and nothing was thrown up but the fine black earth, the "Tchernaya Zemlia," without a stone in it large enough to use against a stray dog. I was innocent enough to ask about the rotation of crops; my friend was puzzled. He grew wheat one year; then he scratched up the ground with a plough containing marvellously little iron in its composition, and sowed it with wheat again; — and that was the rotation, and had been ever since he remembered. But did it never lie fallow? Oh yes; sometimes they had such

enormous crops throughout the district that there was no market for them at a remunerative price; so they sowed a less breadth of land the next year, and left it in grass. Between Riazan and Tambov I found sand underlying the black earth, but could learn nothing as to whether this was the general substratum, or whether, as in another case, it was clay."

The road, which up to this point had been hard, if not smooth, gave way before a little falling rain; and we had a hard struggle to make out the distance to Riazan. Often in despair, even with five horses, our postillions struck out from the road on to ploughed fields, or made short cuts across the country. The bridges were perhaps the worst part, with rotten timbers and holes, so that the horses were in constant danger of breaking their legs in them; and indeed had we left the one usual track, in passing any other vehicle on a bridge, we should inevitably have come to grief. Anything to equal the abyss of mud and dilapidation I never saw. It is a matter of congratulation that my journey was not commenced by this road; for it would probably have had a serious influence upon my ideas of a lengthened tour.

A beautiful avenue, marking out the "bolshoi

doroga," leads to the foot of the hill on which Riask stands, and thence we struggle painfully up the steep and rocky road into the town itself. From the summit we look back on the plain and the road and the long winding avenue of soft, drooping birch trees, so beautiful in retrospect, so laborious in fruition. We had that morning passed an officer travelling with a courier's padaroshno, besides a variety of ordinary travellers. "Dulce mari e magno." At night it froze rather sharply; and the mud and water, congealed at the surface, sometimes bearing, sometimes giving way, added considerably to the labour of our progress. In the morning we had to wait a couple of hours for horses, during which time the mud which blocked up the wheels was frozen so hard as to require hatchets to remove it. Later the snow set in; and with sincere satisfaction, about 6.0 o'clock on the ninth evening after leaving Astrakhan, we completed our last stage of mud and ruts, and drew up at the hotel near the post-house at Riazan.

Riazan, the chief town of the government of the same name, is a city of some 9000 or 10,000 inhabitants, and is situated on a rising ground overlooking the Trubej, a confluent of the Oka, into which it

falls a short distance below the town. Riazan possesses no important trade or manufactures; but it is the seat of an archbishop. The cathedral, a square edifice of red brick, surmounted by five green domes, is the most striking object on approaching the city, and is remarkably devoid of architectural ornament saving the elaborately sculptured and twisted columns of its two rows of windows. Nor is the interior, in spite of its antiquity, more interesting, except as regards its immense iconostase, richly carved and gilt. From the terrace of the cathedral and from the adjacent palace of the archbishop, an extensive view is obtained of the plains through which the Oka winds. An active commerce with the Volga is carried on by means of this river; and a friend, writing in the month of September, says, "It is now alive with barks bringing goods from the fair of Nizhni-Novgorod. One of them is laden with above 480 tons of iron, and is towed by thirty-two horses. The cost of the voyage from Nizhni to Kolomna is 480 roubles (75*l.*). These vessels draw about eighteen inches of water; they are flat-bottomed, with enormously long rudders and tillers, and have two tow ropes attached to the mast. In the month of November the rains swell the shallow

stream of the Oka, and in the spring the melting of the snow produces a similar result: the water rising from twenty to thirty feet, and converting the plains before Riazan into a vast lake, the communication between the city and neighbouring villages is carried on by boats. The waters subside in the month of April, after which the cattle feed in plains covered with rich verdure, where the river ran a few weeks previously. From this cause the greater part of these plains is pasturage, the autumn inundations preventing the sowing of grain."

The aspect of the hotel, the European dress of the waiters, the clean tablecloth, the supply of plates, glasses, cups, and spoons, which we thought wonderful and inexhaustible, and above all the consciousness that we had a good hard chaussée before us, made us feel almost at home. We started again at 9.0 after a hearty supper, and made up for our slow progress during the last two days by giving a liberal na vodka, the value of which we received in the extra versts which we made every hour on the magnificent new road. Every one seemed brisk and cheerful at the setting in of winter; and we made good progress, in spite of the multitude of carriages of all kinds which we everywhere met with.

It now froze hard all day; the snow fell thick, and a high wind sent the fallen and falling flakes flying in a dense cloud over the country. It was one of the coldest days I ever experienced, but it was exhilarating beyond measure. Soon after dusk on the evening of the 26th, after ten days' and nights' continuous travelling, during which we had beaten every carriage that we had caught sight of on the road, we rolled merrily over the rough pavement to the door of our old quarters in Moscow.

The next day, during the repair of our carriage, I again visited some of my former friends, and once more went up to the Kremlin terrace. The aspect of the city was now entirely changed since I left it in September; the pageant of the coronation was over, the splendour of the court had again deserted the ancient capital, the brilliant embassies of Europe had departed, and the wonderful vision of the Asiatic deputies had vanished from the scene. But Moscow was still beautiful,—more beautiful, if possible, than before. The snow lay in thick white masses on the roofs, and carpeted the streets through which the lively little sledges with isvostchiks, or drivers, in their characteristic winter dress, were gliding about in every direction. The wind was

still high and the weather stormy; and from the terrace the thick grey-looking snow showers might be seen coming or departing over the distant country.

During the day that we remained in Moscow, I had an opportunity of running rapidly again over a few of the scenes and sights which I had visited before. But as most of them have been so well and fully described both by former travellers and by the "Correspondents" who were present at the coronation, I will detain the reader only by a few details respecting the Tsar Kolokol, or King of Bells, not very generally known, and communicated by the friend whose letters have been before quoted.

"The bell was lifted from the lower floor of the tower of Ivan Velikoi, in front of which it stands; a fact which is recorded in Slavonic characters on a tablet in front of the pedestal in these terms:— 'This bell, cast in 1733 by order of the Empress Anna Joannovna, laid in the earth 103 years, and was placed here by the order of His Most Pious Majesty the Emperor Nicholas I., August 4th, 1836.'

"This enormous bell is 20 feet in height and 22

feet 8 inches in diameter, weighing 360,000 lbs. (160 tons 10 cwt.). The thickest part of the lip measures 24 inches, and a huge fragment broken out is placed against the wall. The bell is of very handsome proportions and richly ornamented, being now surmounted by a ball and cross, and converted into a chapel. On the outside are whole-length portraits, in relief, of Alexis Mikhaelovitch and of the Empress Anne, with the two following inscriptions: —

"'Alexis Mikhaelovitch of blessed memory, Autocrat of Great and Little Russia and of White Russia, commanded that for the Cathedral of the Pure and Glorious Assumption of the Virgin, a bell of copper should be cast of the weight of 8000 poods (288,000 lbs.) in the year of the world 7162, and from the birth of Christ 1654. This bell was used from the year of the world 7176, of J.C. 1668, until the year of the world 7208, A.D. 1700; in which year, June 19th, it was broken by a great fire which occurred in the Kremlin: it was silent until the year of the creation 7239, A.D. 1731.'

"The second inscription runs thus: —

"'By order of the glorious Empress and Autocrat, Anna Joannovna, for the glory of God and

of the Holy Trinity, and in honour of the Holy Virgin in the Cathedral of her Glorious Assumption, the metal of the old bell, of 8000 poods, injured by the fire, was melted, and 2000 poods were added of new metal; in the year of the world 7 . . . . [a flaw], of the nativity of our Lord 173[3], the 4th year of Her Majesty's glorious reign.'

"It is clear to me that the bell was never rung, or even suspended, and that the piece was either broken out by a flaw in the casting, or from a fire subsequently. The two bas-reliefs are unfinished, except as regards the upper portion, the rest being left as a confused and unmeaning outline. Neither have the inscriptions and ornaments been cleaned with the chisel, their interstices being still partly filled with metal and sand. There are several cracks outside the bell which do not traverse its substance, and they are not chipped or bruised where they terminate at the edge of the bell, nor is there any mark of the clapper visible. I conclude, therefore, that either the flaws were produced by an unequal contraction in cooling so large a mass of metal, or that a fire may have taken place in the building while it was being finished. That it was never raised would seem evident from the fact, that

beneath it was found the iron grating on which the core is built previous to forming the mould, and the bell was found in the hole in which it had been originally cast."

The rest of our story is soon told. Owing to the ice and snow which covered the road for the first two days, but which did not extend far enough for us to put the carriage on a sledge, we were six days and nights in reaching Warsaw. The route is entirely without interest; for the new chaussée, which has been constructed almost in a direct line to the town of Brest Litovski, on the Polish frontier, entirely avoids Napoleon's line of march. The marshes of the upper Dnieper and the flats of Poland had but little attraction for us after the more distant parts of our journey; and the thick white fog which hung over the country did not tend to enliven it.

On crossing the frontier, postillions' horns take the place of the Russian horse-bells, reminding us of our first days of posting on the way to Petersburg. The old sounds returned from memory, and we could scarcely believe that we had travelled 6000 miles since we had last heard them. A few leaves still hung upon the trees and others strewed the ground, recalling, after the utter wintry nakedness of Russia,

a feeble but welcome image of the pleasant autumn days of the West.

On the 3rd of November we once more found ourselves in Warsaw. The next day we bade a final adieu to the tarantasse which for nearly two months had been our only home, and which had carried us in safety through the forest regions of the North, along the mountain roads of the Urals, over the Kalmuck Steppes and the country of the Don Cossacks, back again to the land of railroads, and within three days of England.

APPENDIX.

TRADE

	Imports.								Exports.—			
	Period 1833-37.		Period 1849-53.		Increase.		Decrease.		Period 1833-37.		Period 1849-53.	
	Sil. Roub.	Per Cent.	*Silv. Roub.*	Per Cent.	*Sil. Roub.*	Per Cent.	*Sil. Roub.*	Per Cent.	*Sil. Roub.*	Per Cent.	*Silv. Roub.*	Per Cent.
China	2,179,900	31·0	6,176,400	45·8	1,496,200 †		-	-	1,819,400	36·8	6,146,400	60·0
Persia	2,009,100	28·6	3,195,900	23·6	1,486,800	74·0	-	-	828,700	16·8	831,900	8·1
Steppes of the Kirghiz	1,200,100	17·1	1,924,700	13·0	724,600	60·4	-	-	984,400	19·9	1,717,800	16·8
Asiatic Turkey	319,900	4·6	770,900	5·2	451,000	14·1	-	-	238,009	4·8	737,700	7·2
Bokhara	569,500	9·5	627,400	4·3	-	-	42,100	6·3	315,400	6·4	340,600	3·3
Khiva	141,600	2·0	214,300	1·5	72,700	51·3	-	-	11 ,000	2·2	87,500	0·8
Khanat of Khokan	83,900	1·2	33,300	0·2	-	-	50,600	63·0	158,400	3·2	21,700	0·2
Other countries *	421,900	6·0	1,244,200	8·4	822,300	195·0	-	-	491,500	9·9	367,200	3·6
	7,025,900	100	14,786,800	100	7,853,600		92,700		4,946,800	100	10,250,800	100
Deduct decrease			-		92,700		-		-		-	
Nett increase			-		7,760,900		-		-		-	

* Composed of the imports from Tashkend, the principal city of the Khanat of Khokan, to the extent of 539,000 roub., and of the imports of European articles into the Caucasian provinces to the extent of 705,200 roub., — imports which were not separately given in the official tables of the period 1833-37.

† This increase is to a certain extent merely apparent; for in 1841 a change took place in the rate of valuation adopted for the Russo-Chinese commerce through Kiakhta, by which the estimated price of tea was nearly doubled, and the nominal price of Russian exports raised in almost the same proportion. The rates of valuation had

WITH ASIA.

Exports.				Total Movement.							
Increase.		Decrease.		Period 1833–37.		Period 1849–53.		Increase.		Decrease.	
Sil. Roub.	Per Cent.	Sil. Roub.	Per Cent.	Silv. Roub.	Per Cent.	Silv. Roub.	Per Cent.	Silv. Roub.	Per Cent.	Sil. Roub.	Per Cent.
4,327,000	†	-	-	3,999,300	33·4	12,622,500	50·4	8,623,200	†		
3,200	0·4	-	-	2,837,800	23·7	4,327,800	17·3	1,490,000	52·2		
733,100	75·0	-	-	2,184,500	18·2	3,642,500	14·6	1,458,000	67·0		
499,700	210·0	-	-	537,900	4·7	1,588,600	6·0	950,700	170·0	-	-
25,200	8·0	-	-	961,900	8·3	968,000	3·9	-	-	10,700	1·6
-	-	27,500	21·0	252,600	2·1	301,800	1·2	49,200	19·5		
-	-	136,700	86·0	242,300	2·0	55,000	0·2	-	-	187,300	77·3
-	-	124,300	25·0	913,400	7·6	1,611,400	6·4	698,000	76·4		
5,588,500		284,500		11,972,700	100	25,037,600	100	13,269,100		204,200	
284,500		-		-		-		204,200			
5,304,000		-		-		-		13,064,900			

been fixed in 1800, when the paper rouble was not far from par; but the value of paper currency having fallen below 30 per cent., the estimated price represented in paper diverged more and more from the real value in proportion to the depreciation, and it was on this account that a new rate of valuation was adopted. But setting aside the colourable increase arising from the change in the official values, there is a real augmentation on the total movement of about 3½ million roubles, or from 45 to 50 per cent., in the trade with China, and of upwards of 7 millions, or about 45 per cent., in the entire trade with Asia.

The following are the particulars of the imports and exports in our trade with the various countries mentioned in the table: —

Trade with China.

Imports.			Exports.		
	Silv. Roub.	Per Cent.		*Silv. Roub.*	Per Cent.
Tea - -	6,110,900	94·4	Woollen manufactures (mostly cloth) - -	2,598,000	42·3
Refined sugar -	97,500	1·5	Cotton goods -	1,398,800	22·8
Silks (including raw silk 10,500 roub.'s) - -	68,400	1·1	Peltry - -	1,103,700	18·0
Cotton manufactures - -	29,200	0·4	Youfts and other dressed hides -	605,100	9·8
Miscellaneous -	170,100	2·6	Linen and hempen manufactures -	106,100	1·7
			Wrought metals -	73,800	1·2
			Coral - -	57,700	0·9
			Horn - - -	35,000	0·6
			Miscellaneous -	164,700	2·7
Total -	6,476,100	100	Total -	6,146,400	100

In our imports from China it will be seen that, with the exception of tea, there is nothing to make a trade. Of our exports, woollen manufactures, cloth especially, represent more than two-fifths, cottons nearly a fourth, and peltry nearly a fifth. Youfts and other dressed hides form nearly 10 per cent.

Trade with Persia.

Imports.			Exports.		
	Silver Roub.	Per Cent.		*Silver Roub.*	Per Cent.
Cotton manufactures	1,392,500	39·8	Iron - - -	164,400	19·8
Silk manufactures -	414,600	11·9	Caucasian silk -	130,800	15·7
Raw and thrown silk	370,900	10·6	Drugs - -	60,600	7·3
Fruit - - -	314,000	9·0	Wrought metals -	57,600	6·9
Cereals - -	140,500	4·0	Dye-stuffs (chiefly Dorbent saffron and madder) -	50,300	6·0
Raw cotton - -	106,100	3·0	Copper - -	48,300	5·8
Cotton twist - -	84,800	2·4	Hides - -	36,300	4·4
Peltry - -	83,500	2·4	Linen and hempen fabrics - -	35,400	4·3
Woollen fabrics (chiefly shawls) -	76,800	2·2	Woollen manufactures - -	32,500	3·9
Fish - - -	73,000	2·1	Wrought gold and gold wire - -	32,300	3·9
Cattle - - -	73,000	2·1	Silk manufactures -	31,600	3·8
Dye-stuffs - -	42,500	1·2	Wheat - -	22,000	2·6
Hides and skins -	35,500	1·0	Unwrought metals -	19,200	2·3
Miscellaneous -	288,700	8·3	Cotton manufactures	10,600	1·2
			Miscellaneous -	100,600	12·1
Total - -	3,495,900	100	Total - -	831,900	100

Here cotton manufactures form two-fifths of our imports, — a circumstance which is owing to the prevalent use amongst our Mussulman populations of the Caucasus of fabrics manufactured in the Oriental style. The same is the case with regard to some Oriental silks. The third article on the list is the Persian silk worked up in our Moscow factories; and these three together form more than three-fifths of the total importation. Our exports, relatively small, consist of a variety of articles of which iron and Caucasian silk (which the Persians use for some ordinary fabrics on account of its cheapness) form the chief.

Trade with the Steppes of the Kirghiz.

Imports.			Exports.		
	Silver Roub.	Per Cent.		*Silver Roub.*	Per Cent.
Cattle and sheep	1,312,300	68·2	Cotton manufactures	807,600	47·0
Hides	181,700	9·4	Wheat	280,500	16·3
Peltry	105,000	5·5	Youfts and dressed hides	206,000	12·0
Horses	65,000	3·4	Woollen manufactures (chiefly cloth)	102,500	6·0
Cotton manufactures	39,300	2·0	Wrought metal	46,500	2·7
Woollen ditto	36,100	1·9	Horses	32,900	1·9
Miscellaneous	185,300	9·6	Iron	20,300	1·2
			Silk manufactures	20,200	1·2
Total	1,924,700	100	Peltry	16,900	1·0
			Miscellaneous	173,900	10·7
			Total	1,717,800	100

Cattle and sheep (chiefly the latter, valued for their tallow), hides, and peltry represent 83 per cent. of our imports from the Steppes of the Kirghiz. Our chief exports are cotton manufactures, wheat, and leather.

Trade with Asiatic Turkey.

Imports.			Exports.		
	Silver Roubles.	Per Cent.		*Silver Roubles.*	Per Cent.
Cotton goods	380,600	49·4	Caucasian silk	317,200	43·0
Tobacco	84,600	11·0	Hides	97,600	13·3
Silks	81,800	10·6	Cereals	84,900	11·5
Peltry	39,300	5·1	Caviar	36,500	4·9
Fruit	17,300	2·2	Timber	29,400	4·0
Grain	15,800	2·0	Raw cotton	28,200	3·9
Cattle	15,500	2·0	Cattle	26,000	3·5
Hides	13,400	1·7	Wax	21,700	2·9
Woollens	12,900	1·7	Silks	19,800	2·7
Dye-stuffs	12,800	1·7	Wool	19,200	2·6
Miscellaneous	96,900	12·6	Miscellaneous	57,200	7·7
Total	770,900	100	Total	737,700	100

Of the imports, cotton goods represent nearly half, and along with tobacco and silk goods make up more than seven-tenths. Nearly seven-tenths of the exports are composed of Caucasian silk, hides, and cereals.

Trade with Bokhara.

Imports.			Exports.		
	Silver Roubles.	Per Cent.		*Silver Roubles.*	Per Cent.
Cotton goods - -	268,800	42·8	Cotton goods - -	140,400	41·2
Peltry - - - -	106,000	16·9	Youfts and other sorts of leather -	41,400	12·2
Cotton twist - -	79,400	12·7	Iron - - -	28,900	8·5
Raw cotton * -	68,400	10·9	Wrought metals -	26,800	7·9
Cattle † - - - -	22,800	3·6	Dye-stuffs - -	22,300	6·5
Fruit - - -	21,300	3·4	Refined sugar -	19,800	5·9
Silk manufactures -	11,900	1·9	Woollen manufactures - - -	18,900	5·5
Dye-stuffs - -	11,200	1·8	Miscellaneous -	42,100	12·8
Miscellaneous -	37,600	6·0			
Total - -	627,400	100	Total - -	340,600	100

Cotton goods represent more than two-fifths both of the imports and of the exports. Next to this article the chief imports are peltry, cotton twist, and raw cotton, and the chief exports leather and iron.

Trade with Khiva.

Imports.			Exports.		
	Silv. Roub.	Per Cent.		*Silv. Roub.*	Per Cent.
Raw cotton - -	74,400	34·7	Cotton manufactures - - -	29,500	33·7
Cotton manufactures - - -	56,800	26·5	Youfts and leather	13,600	15·5
Dye-stuffs - -	56,200	26·2	Dye-stuffs - -	12,600	14·4
Miscellaneous -	26,900	12·6	Miscellaneous -	31,800	36·4
Total - -	214,300	100	Total - -	87,500	100

Raw and manufactured cotton and dye-stuffs form nearly nine-tenths of the imports. The exports are insignificant.

* The raw cotton is of a very ordinary description, and chiefly used for preparing wicks.

† The only importation of cattle figuring in the returns was in 1853, to the value of 114,000 roubles.

Trade with the City of Tashkend.

Imports.			Exports.		
	Silver Roubles.	Per Cent.		Silver Roubles.	Per Cent.
Cotton manufactures	250,500	46·5	Cotton manufactures	199,200	54·2
Fruit	122,400	22·7	Leather	78,700	21·4
Peltry	49,200	9·1	Woollens (chiefly cloth)	16,300	4·4
Silk manufactures	22,400	4·2	Iron	16,200	4·4
Raw cotton	19,600	3·6	Worked metals	15,800	4·3
Cotton twist	13,200	2·5	Dye-stuffs	12,000	3·3
Miscellaneous	61,700	11·4	Miscellaneous	29,000	8·0
Total	539,000	100	Total	367,200	100

Here again, as in the trade with Bokhara, cotton goods form the main article both of import and export. Next to them come fruit and peltry amongst the imports, and leather amongst the exports.

Trade with Khokan, exclusive of the City of Tashkend.

This trade in itself insignificant (the imports averaging only 33,300 roub. and the exports 21,700 roub.) consists to the extent of three-fourths in an exchange of cotton goods against cotton goods, this single article forming 77 per cent. of the imports and 82 per cent. of the exports.

THE END.

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